St. Charles Seminary Library
Carthagena, Ohio

$2.00 June 19, 1992

# COMMONWEAL

"No need to panic. It's the new hysteria."

## CONSIDER THE ECONOMY

**HOW WE LOST OUR SHIRT**
**Charles K. Wilber**

**WHEN YOU STOP, YOU DIE**
**Thomas J. Cottle**

**WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE ?**
**Kenneth P. Jameson**

**An editor's notebook: PAUL BAUMANN**

**JOHN GARVEY: Wunerful, wunerful!**

**NG FOR PEROT... NOT**
**Louis Horowitz**

**Art: LEE SIEGEL**

**Screen: RICHARD ALLEVA**

**Stage: GERALD WEALES**

**BOOKS**

**Life Itself: MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS**
**Mariette in Ecstasy: ELIZABETH BEVERLY**
**The End of History and the Last Man: PATRICK J. DENEEN**

**********3-DIGIT 458
CW 00079972 9222
ST CHARLES SEMINARY
LIBRARY
CARTHAGENA STA
CELINA OH 45822

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# CORRESPONDENCE

## The media & character

Green Bay, Wis.

*To the Editors:* I really enjoyed Abigail McCarthy's column on "The Character Issue" [May 8]. As a teacher of history and a student of politics, I have wondered how FDR, Thomas Jefferson, Grover Cleveland, or any of our past presidents would have stood up under the kind of "character" scrutiny that has become routine. It's not that character shouldn't be examined, but when the media are done with their sound bites I'm not sure that we know anything at all about a candidate's character. For one thing, the focus is always on the negative, perhaps because it takes less work to cover reputed or potential scandal (and thereby to reaffirm the voters' negative impression of politics) than it does to examine the issues that need addressing. It's a little amusing that the media react with surprise when exit polls indicate disenchantment with Bush and Clinton as choices. It's like a reviewer who trashes a movie and then is surprised that no one wants to see it.

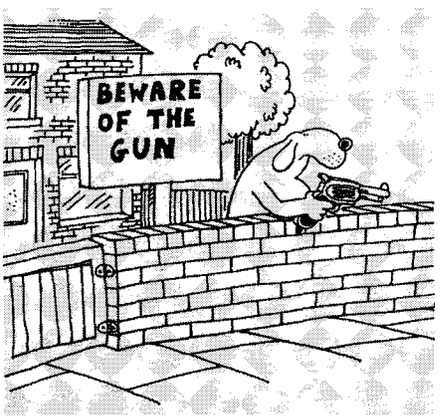
(REV.) MICHAEL FLANARY

## Guns in plenty

New Smyrna Beach, Fla.

*To the Editors*: In his letter to the editors [Correspondence, April 24] Roland Laird criticizes Margaret O'Brien Steinfels's column [March 16] on recent tragic events at two schools in New York City, saying that "measures to prevent easy access to firearms by teen-agers" are "the business of legislation and enforcement." Of all places in the U.S., and maybe the world, I cannot imagine what legislative measures Mr. Laird has in mind. New York is saturated with gun control laws. If there is easy access to firearms by teen-agers or anyone else in New York, it is not for lack of laws.

ERNEST G. MARQUIS




## Cheap shot on Hillary

Middletown, N.J.

*To the Editors*: All that I learned from Margaret O'Brien Steinfels's column, "Rights 'R Us" [May 8], is that Ms. Steinfels does not like Hillary Clinton. It sounded like an old grudge job, or, in street language, a "cheap shot."

EDWARD F. ROGERS

## A high-minded failure

Chula Vista, Calif.

*To the Editors:* Because I am accustomed to the highmindedness usually in evidence in the writing of Margaret O'Brien Steinfels, I was disappointed by her recent "Editor's Notebook" focusing on an essay by Hillary Clinton. The column really didn't go anywhere except, apparently, to complain that children's rights advocates in general and Mrs. Clinton in particular are somehow to blame because children aren't doing better in our society now than they were earlier. I especially saw no grounds for the column's final dig asking God not to let Mrs. Clinton be involved with the welfare of children if she gets into government. If I'm wrong, I apologize; if I'm not, apologies are due elsewhere.

JOSEPH F. DELANO

## Off the soap box

Notre Dame, Ind.

*To the Editors:* Although I recently met her, at this stage of the campaign I have no axe to grind either to champion or to behead Hillary Clinton. Nonetheless, I found myself annoyed with Margaret O'Brien Steinfels's "Rights 'R Us: Kids, Hillary & the Law."

If there is evidence that Hillary's views on the protection of children have not matured in nineteen years of living—from single, recent law school grad to wife, mother, and public figure—Steinfels doesn't mention it. If it is, as Steinfels asserts, "clear: She didn't have the answers back in 1973," it is not at all clear from Steinfels's piece—nor even considered—whether there is any basis for the assertion that "she probably doesn't have them now." Without so much as a mention of what Clinton's current position on children's rights may be, Steinfels's critique seems more than a little gratuitous.

If, on the other hand, the point of the memoir was simply to say, "I encountered Hillary back when...and was unimpressed,"

*(Continued on page 29)*

**Correction**: We lost the libretti! Through a printing error, we inadvertently dropped the last two words of Rev. Edward J. McKenna's June 5 article, "When Catholics Could Sing." The final sentence should read: "It's all there, in the lightsome eye, *and* in the libretti." Our apologies to the author and to our readers. THE EDITORS

*Commonweal* is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, Index of American Periodical Verse, Book Review Digest and Book Review Index. Microfilm from Vol. 1, 1924, to current issues available through University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and on Microfiche from Bell & Howell, Wooster, Ohio 44691. Serials Data program No.: ISSN 0010-3330. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional offices. Copyright © 1992 Commonweal Foundation. Single Copy, $2. Yearly subscriptions, U.S., $36; Canada, $39; foreign, $41. Special two-year rate: U.S., $62; Canada, $66; foreign, $72. All Canadian and foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. dollars by International Money Order or by check on a U.S. bank.

*Illustrations:* cover design, p. 4, Emil Antonucci; cover art, p. 24, Ross, Rothco; p. 2, Banx, Rothco; p. 5, Ray, Rothco; pp. 8, 9, 15, 30, Baloo, Rothco; p. 11, Punch, Rothco; p. 19, *Andrea Mantegna*, 1992, Royal Academy of Arts, London and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; p. 21, Paul Valerry.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMONWEAL

## CONTENTS

Volume CXIX, Number 12


| | |
|---|---|
| Correspondence | 2 |
| Editorials | 3 |
| An editor's notebook: *Paul Baumann* | 5 |
| Waiting for Perot—Not: *Irving Louis Horowitz* | 6 |
| Hitting the high Cs: *J. Bryan Hehir* | 7 |
| Wunerful, wunerful!: *John Garvey* | 9 |
| How we lost our shirt: *Charles K. Wilber* | 11 |
| When you stop, you die: *Thomas J. Cottle* | 15 |
| Art: *Lee Siegel* | 18 |
| Screen: *Richard Alleva* | 20 |
| Stage: *Gerald Weales* | 21 |
| Poetry: *Dave Leedy, S.E. Mead* | 23 |
| **BOOKS** | |
| Life Itself: *Margaret O'Brien Steinfels* | 24 |
| The End of History and the Last Man: *Patrick J. Deneen* | 25 |
| Mariette in Ecstasy: *Elizabeth Beverly* | 26 |
| What Does the Lord Require?: *Kenneth P. Jameson* | 28 |



## STAFF

Editor: Margaret O'Brien Steinfels
Managing Editor: Patrick Jordan
Associate Editor: Paul Baumann
Production Editor: Jacqueline Dowdell
Senior Writer: Robert G. Hoyt
Movies: Richard Alleva
Stage: Gerald Weales
Poetry: Rosemary Deen
Intern: Jessica Bayne
Columnists: John Garvey, J. Bryan Hehir, Abigail McCarthy, David R. Carlin, Jr.
Staff: Harriette Balsky, Carmen Alava, Pamela Quatse
Advertising Manager: Ruth E. Taylor
Publisher: Edward S. Skillin


*Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters should not exceed 250 words and are subject to editing for clarity and spacing limitations.*

*Commonweal*, [ISSN 0010-3330] A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, is published biweekly, except monthly Christmas, New Year's and July and August, by Commonweal Foundation, 15 Dutch St., New York, N.Y. 10038. Telephone: (212) 732-0800. Display advertising correspondence should be sent to Ruth E. Taylor, 11 Graffam Rd., So. Portland, Me. 04106 (207) 799-4387, classified advertising correspondence to 15 Dutch St. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Commonweal, 15 Dutch St. New York, N.Y. 10038.

# Saving lives?

Abortions may save lives. That paradoxical claim lies behind congressional support for lifting a ban on medical research using fetal tissue derived from abortions. Although the vote on a National Institutes of Health reappropriation bill, which includes funding for such research, was not sufficient to override a presidential veto, the measure is likely to come up again. The ban has been in place since 1988. It is tough to argue in favor of maintaining the ban, as the votes of normally prolife advocates in Congress show. In fact, anti-abortion Senator Mark Hatfield (R-Oreg.) said he found the use of fetal tissue to save lives "prolife."

If the ban is ultimately lifted, cures are predicted for Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, diabetes, genetic disorders, and radiation injuries. Congress seems to have little resistance to the pleas of the sick and their advocates, especially when they are dramatic and especially when they show up on the congressional doorstep or are related to a member of congress (Senator Strom Thurmond [R-S.C.] sees a potential cure for his diabetic daughter). But dramatic appeals and promises of medical breakthroughs always need to be scrutinized with a skeptical eye, especially in circumstances where the claims for cure far exceed the data, and even more so when the promise of a cure rests upon the availability of aborted fetal tissue.

For dramatic appeal before Congress, consider the example of the man suffering from kidney failure who, in the 1970s, was dialyzed before a congressional committee in a compelling plea for federal funds to make the treatment more widely available. Congress obliged. As a result, the prior system of rationing dialysis, especially for those who might eventually find a compatible kidney for transplant, has disappeared. Many people now survive because of the federal program that pays the cost of dialysis. Who could object?

Unfortunately, for large numbers of patients, no compatible transplants are available. So dialysis has become a necessary, and costly, treatment for kidney failure, and, of course, its use has been extended far beyond the otherwise relatively healthy people for whom it was first devised as a bridge between kidney failure and a kidney transplant. The case is relevant to the current debate over fetal tissue research.

To begin with, the promise of a dramatic cure or a treatment that will save lives is an effective tool in prising federal support and funds for research. In the debate over use of fetal tissue, men and women with Parkinson's testified to the remission of their symptoms after being given fetal-cell implants. The Reverend Guy Walden, a Southern Baptist minister, told a congressional hearing of the implant's potential in extending the life of his son who has Hurler's syndrome, a fatal genet-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ic condition that killed two other sons. Proponents argue that the fetal tissues, organs, and cells now abundantly available are simply being wasted. They should be made available to researchers along with federal money to test the potential for alleviating symptoms of crippling disease or curing fatal ones. Among the supporters there are those who, though opposed to abortion, would further argue that this research is one way to see good come from the deaths caused by abortion.

And then, there are the unforeseen consequences of beginning and funding research and treatment programs that it will be impossible to end, indeed even to control, after thousands or hundreds of thousands become dependent on their availability—in this case, dependent as well on the availability of abortion. Currently, research with fetal tissues is being conducted on a very small scale with private funds and, at least in this country, only with tissues from ectopic pregnancies, miscarriages, and stillbirths (in fact, federal funding is available for this form of fetal tissue research). But because these kinds of tissue may have become infected or may be genetically defective, researchers say they would prefer tissues and organs from "healthy" fetuses, ones that have been aborted.

And it is here that the argument becomes very difficult, as illustrated by the testimony of Guy Walden. For Walden is opposed to abortion, and according to news reports, his son was treated with fetal cells that came not from an abortion but from an ectopic pregnancy. Yet in testimony before Congress, Walden argued, "Right now this tissue [from aborted fetuses] is being thrown in the trash cans. If we can save a life [by using it], shouldn't we?" If prolifers like Walden can make the moral jump that separates the use of fetal tissues from the means by which they are made available, then the argument against approval is very tough indeed.

Yet the argument must be made. And it is clear enough: the ends are contradicted by the means. Taking innocent human lives in order to save other human lives undermines a basic principle of the moral code that sustains our society and the legal code that regulates our common life. Of course, one assumes that in most cases there would be no direct relationship between the abortion decision—it was not made "in order to" save a life—and the use of the fetal remains for medical lifesaving. But lifting the ban would allow an indirect link to be forged, and not simply for this or that exceptional case. Abortion would become that much more an institutionalized part of the health-care system, factored into research plans, providing returns to the pharmaceutical industry, and sharing in the moral legitimacy of the lifesaving enterprise.

Mr. Walden's very language shows how easy it is to become insensitive to the morally problematic character of this enterprise. To refer to fetal tissue as if it were mere tissue disembedded from its human provenance, or to speak of finding it in a trash can as if magically transported from we-know-not-where, evades the morally obvious. Of course, fetal tissue is human tissue—not even *Roe* v. *Wade* denies that. This tissue was once part of a developing life that has been destroyed and dispatched. Harvesting that tissue in order to save or sustain another, wanted human life cannot redeem the taking of life in the first place (drawing good out of evil). For that reason after World War II the scientific community chose to forego whatever knowledge might derive from Nazi medical experiments.

Among those who do not see abortion as the taking of a human life, there are certainly some who, nonetheless, might agree that there is no reason to capitalize on what may be a tragic necessity for some women. For others who support abortion and have no problem using the tissue, more pragmatic arguments have been mounted against using aborted fetal tissue: that it might encourage women to have abortions, even late abortions, especially if a fetal organ might be transplanted into a relative, for example, another child; that it might lead to the selling and buying of fetal body parts; that by encouraging, rewarding, or pressuring women to serve as reproducers of surplus parts and tissues, it would demean them as persons, as women, and as mothers (an argument some feminists have raised against surrogate motherhood).

Legislative efforts, embodied in the NIH bill, to create a wall between abortion and the subsequent use of fetal tissue suggest one way to meet some of these objections. Yet we find it improbable that these strictures would stand if researchers did devise treatments or find cures. Once again, Congress would find itself listening to stories of human suffering that they do not have the heart—or the moral resources—to resist.

## ET CETERA

**BRAVE NEW WORLD OF LITURGY** As weary catechists know, the process of Christian initiation is a long and complex one. But one has to begin somewhere. In that spirit, we report on two incidents from the liturgical frontier. A mother of a kindergartener is preparing breakfast for her giddy five-year-old daughter. While handing her child a bowl of cereal, the mother is suddenly presented with a small hand to shake. "Beast!" says her daughter. Although delighted by this unique salutation, the mother is also confused. "What do you mean?" she asks. "Beast," her daughter says again, and again shakes her mother's hand dutifully. "What?" her mother says, truly perplexed at this point. "Beast, Mom," says the five-year-old, "you know, what we say in church."

In another diocese two states away an irrepressible three-year-old is being taken to Easter Mass. Sitting between her parents, she fidgets anxiously as the church fills up. Five minutes pass. Finally, unable to contain herself any longer, the little girl turns hopefully to her mother. "Mommie," she cries out, "when is the movie going to start!"

Beast be with you.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

**AN EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK**

# SUCH, SUCH WERE THE JOYS

## THE RHETORIC OF RACIAL VIOLENCE

I woke early and a bit apprehensive the Thursday morning after the Rodney King verdict in Los Angeles. It was around 7, I think, when I headed toward the subway at 96th Street and Broadway. A heavy-set black woman, ill-kempt and grim-faced, was leaning over the railing of the subway entrance. "Fucking asshole," she said as I passed. She then turned and addressed some invisible multitude in the streets. "Whattaya gonna to do about California, black people?" she shouted.

I wasn't keen to find out what she had in mind. This blessedly brief encounter—amplified that night when a car was torched in front of our building—brought back the ceaseless racial hectoring and politically charged violence of my college days in the early 1970s. That was the last—and I hope the only—time I was in a race riot. Racial violence is as impersonal as a plane crash—there is no slipping out of your assigned seat. At such times, only the most mundane moral habits are likely to preserve human decency.

Like most of the white students at my exclusive New England college, I was embarrassed by American racism, humbled by the moral authority of blacks, and intensely sympathetic to black efforts for redress. I still am. My university boasted of its "liberal" values, and had made a significant commitment to minority recruitment, which was then and still is a necessary goal. Twenty percent of my class were minority students. Alas, it might as well have been zero percent. This was at the height of the black power craze, and the official black attitude toward whites was one of separatism and contempt. There was little social contact between the races. On our campus radical black students, or at least their spokesmen, emphasized the utter irredeemability, if not the depravity of whites. It was not until my junior year that I learned, in a conversation initiated by a black hallmate of mine who was transferring to a large and less prestigious Midwestern university, of how oppressive some black students found the obligatory racial antagonism. "Bullshitters," he said of the school's black leaders.

*"I have a feeling there's a tragic story there."*

Intramural athletics created particular friction. My sophomore year the black team met the football fraternity in the intramural basketball championship. A friend of mine, a senior and a pacifist who was applying for conscientious objector status, was the referee. The game was rough, especially the behavior of one black player known for his volatility. Perhaps few of his black classmates liked this guy or thought he was justified in the abusive things he did. But the racial politics of the day prevented them from criticizing him. Most whites were similarly timid or politically misguided.

Near the end of the game, this guy went beserk. It was a chilling and defining moment for me. I was in the stands, frozen by shock and fear as he mercilessly attacked my friend, the referee, over some imagined injustice. My friend offered no physical resistence, but merely tried to cover his face. Whites and blacks squared off across the gymnasium, for to intervene was to invite a full-scale escalation of the bloodshed. To do nothing, of course, meant watching a defenseless person be seriously injured. Finally—it seemed like forever but was only seconds or minutes, I imagine—a large white football player moved to stop the beating. While he intervened, the football player's finger was bitten to the bone by the black student.

I went to the director of athletics the next morning. Outside the classroom the university exerted little authority and exhibited even less interest in the behavior of students. Given the way things generally worked, I was fearful that nothing would be done about the incident. I volunteered to testify at a judicial proceeding. He thanked me, confessed dismay over the inability of the university to discipline the student involved, and assured me that something would be done. I waited, somewhat nervously, to be called upon. Nothing happened as far as I ever knew. Certainly no public disciplinary action was taken, and the incident has remained a paradigm for me of how empty good intentions can be if they are not anchored to some code of personal responsibility that transcends racial or other grievances. Liberal tolerance turned out to be just another word for cowardice—and of course condescension. As a consequence, I don't trust most liberals either to keep the peace or to pursue justice in difficult situations. (I don't trust conservatives either, but at least they don't pretend to care.) Policemen—or big football players—usually have to step in to save the innocent. The habit of moral action, not good intentions, is what counts in the crunch.

A riot in a college gymnasium is not carnage in the streets



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of a ghetto. Still, the blood on the floor and the hate behind the blows were as real as that in L.A. And not all the violence at my college was intramural. Confrontation and physical intimidation were routine, people were shot at, buildings burned, and one conservative student was burned out of his room.

I can't help but see the riot in Los Angeles, and especially the predictable political debate that followed, in light of my college experience. I think it self-evident that the effort to authenticate violence as the "voice" of the oppressed does next to nothing for the poor and can only increase the cynicism between the races. Indeed, South Central Los Angeles is already slipping from national consciousness, leaving the real victims of the so-called "rebellion" to mourn their dead among the ruins. The first thing the violent deserve is our condemnation. To do otherwise is the real moral and racial conceit.

PAUL BAUMANN

CAMPAIGN '92

## WAITING FOR PEROT—NOT

### MORE LIABILITIES THAN ASSETS

The "causes" of the independent candidacy of H. Ross Perot for president are now well known. His candidacy, initially greeted with bemused dismissal by the professionals, is now the subject of intense scrutiny by these very same professionals. For better or worse, in truth or in error, there is a widespread belief in the inefficiency of the two-party system; in the corruption and venality in the American Congress; in the alleged immorality of at least one candidate and the spinelessness of the other. And on the economic side of the ledger, there is a feeling on the part of the middle class that they have no representation.

Whatever the merits of such assertions, or others like them, H. Ross Perot is certainly not the answer. If anything, his platitudinous soundbites represent a far bigger danger to American democracy than the ills he proposes to remedy. My plea is, not so much against third-party politics, but for retaining a sense of the connection of the causes and consequences of waiting for Perot. Indeed, the latent candidacy of Perot is not so much a third-party effort, but a cult of personality belatedly insinuated into a political campaign that presumably lacks charisma. Such cults have an ugly but proper identification with mass culture and totalitarian politics in the twentieth century.

It might well be argued that Perot's candidacy is less the result of his wealth than the effort by the media to move itself from the periphery to the center of political power. A strategy to market Perot through the Larry King, Phil Donahue, and David Frost talk shows is essentially an effort by that segment of the media to play an active role in the presidential election, one beyond just tallying up results or providing prime time for debates. In this curious scenario, Perot is able to muster support without spending a dime of his vaunted billions. Indeed, by all accounts, his regular guest appearances not only cost him nothing, but have created a war chest of no small magnitude. Far from representing himself, or being represented as simply a Texas billionaire who outfoxed General Motors, the media have their hands on the pure media candidate: what was only hinted at in the early days of radio and the movies emerges full blown in the nights of television.

There is no gainsaying Perot's skills as a businessman. He has a demonstrable track record deserving of respect and even emulation. But the notion he continually hearkens to—of a business-like government—confuses the nature of commerce with the character of government. Decision making and chain of command in business presuppose a consensus about a service or a product; whereas in government, it is precisely the nature of the consensus itself that is constantly being debated and fine-tuned. That is why our system of checks and balances often appears awkward, clumsy, and unable to get things done—the very bane of a good business or industry. The demand for efficiency in government, argued abstractly by Perot, is a dangerous form of demagogy; ostensibily an appeal for a reduced bureaucracy, it is in fact an argument for greater concentration of power in the executive branch of government, specifically in one individual, the president.

The electorate continues to await Perot's specific proposals or even broad policy papers on a variety of domestic and foreign-policy issues. But Perot has artfully avoided articulating his positions, requesting a sixty-day cooling-off period and quipping that few take campaign pledges seriously anyhow. Indeed, he is on record as saying that "working folks say... 'we're not interested in your damn positions, Perot, we're interested in your principles.'" Aside from the pseudopopulist nonsense involved in such an assertion, the fact is that the public and candidates alike do take such pledges seriously, and that candidates later break them with a deep sense of concern, even fear. In the absence of detailed analysis of the issues, ranging from welfare to warfare, we are thrown back on politics by analogy: how did Ross Perot manage his businesses, and what clues does this provide for the sort of president he would make. The notion of streamlining government is an appealing slogan. The Grace Commission has made a serious attempt at a solution. But there are grave risks that when policies are called for, they will not so much be debated as rammed down the throat of an enthralled citizenry by a "consensus president."

Perot's candidacy is quite different from previous third-party efforts, either sucessful ones such as those of Theodore Roosevelt and the Bull Moose party, or failed ones, from socialist to states' rights to vegetarian. Individuals such as Henry Wallace, Strom Thurmond, Eugene V. Debs, George Wallace, or Robert LaFollette offered either a break from



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

established parties after a lifetime of struggle, or a genuine sense of political options not provided for in the major parties. It is intriguing that there is not even a hint of the nature of a "Perot party." Other than idle speculation about a "running mate"—extending from Jeanne Kirkpatrick and John Connally, each of whom had links to both Democratic and Republican party politics in their careers and therefore fit the mandatory profile of independence, to Colin Powell, who as a miltiary figure without known party affiliation also fits the Perot search for the insider-outsider—there is scant evidence that Perot cares one whit for establishing an authentic, long-lived third party. In the absence of such elementary concerns about political legitimacy and in his insistence that "people want things fixed," the faint whiff of authoritarianism, even dictatorship, can be detected.

At the operational level, we can also envision a most serious problem: a president who, while not "beholden" to various interest groups and constituencies, also has no political allies beholden to him. At best, one can foresee an extended period of political gridlock, the very opposite of what Perot envisions would happen as president. But at worst, we can design a scenario for breaking the gridlock by destroying the delicate web of relationships that we call the American political system. It is one thing to be a self-declared "outsider" as a result of being the mayor of a city or the governor of a state. Such people have earned their spurs in the crucible of party struggles and popular contests. It is quite another thing to be an outsider of Perot's type: outside the political process, its modes and sensibilities. Politics is a culture, just as assuredly as is business. Ross Perot is an outsider, but an outsider to the culture of the political process. As such, he is the problem, and not the solution.

In keeping with *Commonweal*'s usual schedule, only one issue is published each month during July and August. The next issue will be dated July 17.

There is little doubt that the Perot candidacy signifies a deep discontent with the current political process, no less than with the rate of economic growth. And there is little doubt that these concerns and others are legitimate and even urgent. But the Perot candidacy indicates a reaching for solutions far beyond the norms of American party politics, and far beyond our democratic traditions as such. Before we leap to support this white knight in commercial armor, it might be worth our while to carefully note that what we will be losing is far greater and more substantial than what we might be gaining. For there is a means-ends continuity in politics no less than in moral life. Before we cavalierly march into a long night of electronic town meetings, hero worship, and the cult of personality, it behooves us to look deeply not only at Perot, but at our sense of both the purpose of politics and the political process itself. It will avail us little to look back nostalgically on the "colorlessness" of a George Bush or the "sinfulness" of a Bill Clinton when it is too late. It is time now to recognize that the very thought of Perot's candidacy is a reflection of our collective concerns, but not Perot's unique brilliance. IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ

*Irving Louis Horowitz is Hannah Arendt Distinguished Professor of Sociology at Rutgers University. He is the author of* Ideology and Utopia in the United States*; and co-author (with S.M. Lipset) of* Dialogues in American Politics*—both published by Oxford University Press.*

## WORLD WATCH

J. Bryan Hehir

# HITTING THE HIGH Cs

## CHARACTER, CHOICE & COMMUNITY

The conjunction of a presidential campaign and the commencement season produces some questions for the leadership of the country and for the citizenry. In a campaign year the country naturally focuses on what "they" will do for "us," they being those willing or eager to stand for public office. In 1992 the citizenry's conception of what "they" are like is notoriously volatile. The expectation among political commentators is that the election could yield over a hundred new members of Congress and even the possibility of a presidential election being settled in the House of Representatives. Commencements tend to focus attention not on singular public individuals, but on the quality, character, and competence of the citizenry. Some of the graduates will ultimately seek leadership, but most will affect the public life of the nation as voters, citizens, and parents.

The health of a democracy depends upon the political wisdom and moral vision of both leadership and citizenry, so it is useful to test both parts of the body politic with the same questions. This is particularly useful when testing moral vision—a quality leaders should have, but often do not—hence the need to attend to the way moral vision is preserved among the citizenry. Part of the volatility of the present campaign is fueled by the way citizens understand



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*"I want if* all*—let's get started!"*

and weigh the moral dimensions of leadership. From Mr. Clinton's early struggles with personal moral questions to Mr. Quayle's recent foray into the terrain of public values, the campaign has been marked by a persistent although hardly profound concern for the question of ethics and American society.

In some form or other, the issue of values, ethics, and morality has run through presidential campaigns since 1976. The questions have changed: Watergate and the war; abortion and economic justice; race and family life; but the basic theme, by what moral criteria shall personal and public life be judged, never goes away. The reaction to its persistence varies: some say discussion of morality diverts attention from "real issues" such as jobs, economic growth, and the security of the country; others welcome the theme, but despair of it being addressed carefully under the conditions of electoral politics.

The quality of the public argument about morality is directly tied to the categories by which ethics are defined. An adequate framework for testing both leadership and citizenry should examine three dimensions of ethical argument: an ethic of character, an ethic of choice, and an ethic of community.

An ethic of character focuses attention on what kind of people we are, on the moral fiber of our personal lives. It is the topic which moralists examine in terms of the role of virtue in the moral life. This is the question which citizens are most familiar with; the question which each person in some fashion must ask and answer about the direction of his or her life and the lives of their children. In the political process this familiar question becomes more disputed: how important is the personal character and behavior of public officials? More specifically, which aspects of their personal lives are pertinent to test? One senses in the public discussion a conviction that there must be some close connection between character and public performance, but the conviction quickly yields to confusion about which issues are good tests of that conviction. Moving away from political candidates, there is the question about personal character and social issues: drugs, violence, stability of family life. The policy debate is split between those who seek to define the cause of these problems in terms of character (with much less attention to social structure and social programs designed to address all three) and those who see the character question as an attempt to avoid a serious public effort to address questions of poverty, justice, and social equality.

However the character question is defined, it needs to be related to an ethic of choice. The focus shifts from what kind of people we are to what kind of decisions we make. At this level the moralists shift language and categories from virtues to principles and rules to judge actions of a personal or public nature. The ethic of choice tests the ability of leaders, citizens, and the society as a whole to join a structured moral vision to empirical complexity. The topics can run from the ethics of war to patterns of income distribution to choices about care for the terminally ill.

In addressing these questions, it is clear that the categories of an ethic of character by themselves are not a sufficient moral vision. Character must be joined with a capability to define and decide issues involving both moral principles and contingent, debatable empirical data. The ethic of choice, therefore, is particularly relevant to public officials and to professionals in law, medicine, science, and the military. In political and professional life an ability to choose with professional competence and moral wisdom should be the test of performance. Imposing the test, however, requires that the citizenry have at least a basic conception of an ethic of choice. If some sense of this is lacking, neither public nor professional life can be adequately tested and judged.

Beyond character and choice lies the domain of an ethic of community. The questions here are about the kind of society we seek to create locally, nationally, and internationally. This is the arena of social ethics, where the focus is on institutions, policies, laws, and programs. The ethic of community requires a structured ethic of choice: one cannot build a just society without a secure grasp on the principles of distributive and social justice. But the ethic of community often goes beyond the discourse of rules and principles. The ethic of choice can be minimally or narrowly defined. It can be shaped in an individualistic and purely procedural fashion. An ethic of community seeks to frame the questions of social choice broadly, in light of a conception of the common-good. To raise the common-good issues is to affirm a conception of society that involves our view of human nature—that we are socially responsible to others—and our view of the state—that it has positive moral responsibilities. The notion of an ethic of communi-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ty tests both the meaning of moral principles and our understanding of what an ethic of character requires.

This triple agenda of moral questions —character, choice, and community— cuts across the standard "schools" of ethics. It also cuts across the way we shape political dialogue. To hold all three of these levels of moral argument together is often less tidy and more frustrating than concentrating on only one. But neither the needs of the public order, nor the responsibilities of citizens can be captured by anything less than the three taken as an integral whole. □

**OF SEVERAL MINDS** John Garvey

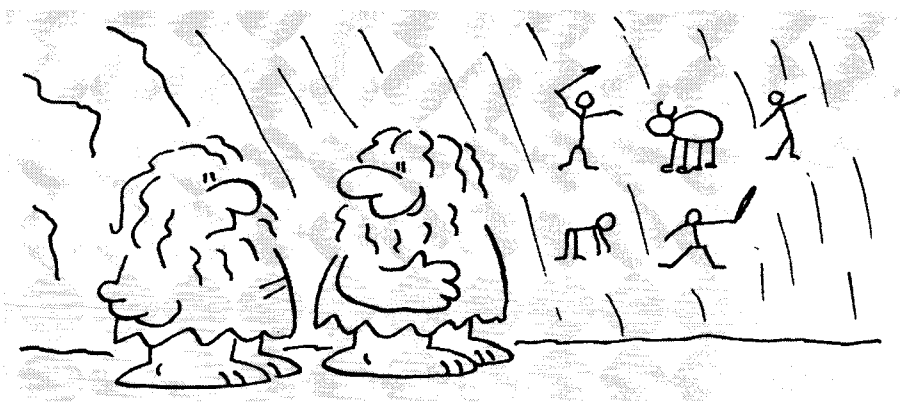
# WUNERFUL, WUNERFUL!

## LIFE WITHOUT TELEVISION

Politics is the oddest collective idea, even stranger than sports. It is wide enough to include Britain's decaying monarchy (it's lovely to watch that, if you're an Irish-American), Peru's vicious Shining Path, America's Ross Perot phenomenon, the Los Angeles riots, and the question of whether a candidate's haircut is relevant to his character. (Answer: it is.) It is a collective argument in which profound questions can be made shallow, as both prolife and prochoice people have managed to make of the abortion issue, and in which silly statements can, oddly, have a share of truth that serious people ought to explore, but may be afraid to.

By now you will have heard of the Dan Quayle/Murphy Brown incident. It was used by lots of commentators to illustrate what's wrong with, and what is comical about, the White House— George Bush and his press spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, were caught unprepared when Quayle, the designated lightweight, said that it was a cultural problem to dramatize, as something worthy of approval, a woman bearing a child out of wedlock. First they agreed, then they didn't; Murphy Brown's choice to bear a child was prolife, etc. It amazed people—as it certainly should have—to think that a single episode of a situation comedy was made politically important, something that can send the leader of the nation into a tizzy. But something else is going on here.

Granting that Quayle has his own narrow political reasons for complaining about TV fare; granting that he and other conservatives are as shortsighted as they can be when they magnify a partial truth into what they apparently think is a sufficient explanation by claiming that it is a breakdown in family and cultural values that led to the riots in Los Angeles; granting of course that Quayle's speech was written for him by people smarter than Quayle—granting these things, it still has to be said that Quayle—or "Quayle" or, to borrow from New Testament scholarship, "Q" (since we are speaking of a word-product as manufactured as Murphy Brown is, something removed by staff handlers and paid writers from a single person or a particular authorship)—this manufactured entity, anyway, has a point. Not that I do not think that single women who are pregnant should not bring their children to birth—I'm for it—but it is a fact that values are communicated to most Americans by television more than by any other means, probably including family and certainly including church, and Americans think the way they think because of television, and little else.



*"It's a hard-hitting exposé of the sleazy side of hunting and gathering!"*

One way you can find this out is by not watching any television, good or bad, at all. For two years we haven't. When my wife and I moved from the Midwest to a small apartment in the East, we took only the necessary things (a computer, various forms of equipment for processing caffeine, and books). Television, though we watched it before our move, was not among the things we cared enough to take with us.

We find the absence of television wonderful. It makes you appreciate how good—and comparatively unaddicting—radio is, if you can tune into some decent stations. We have a television stored in another city, along with a VCR, and if we use it again it will be used solely for watching movies. In its absence, we have found that we have a lot of time, for reading, writing letters, talking with friends. But we have noticed something else: television influences common references, common taglines and joke-phrases; it is frequently the source of allusions made for purposes of illustration. (We learn this because we don't get them.) It is to our culture what the language of the Bible or Shakespeare or Homer was to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the common font from which references are drawn, the shared set of images that made



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

up a collective imaginative experience.

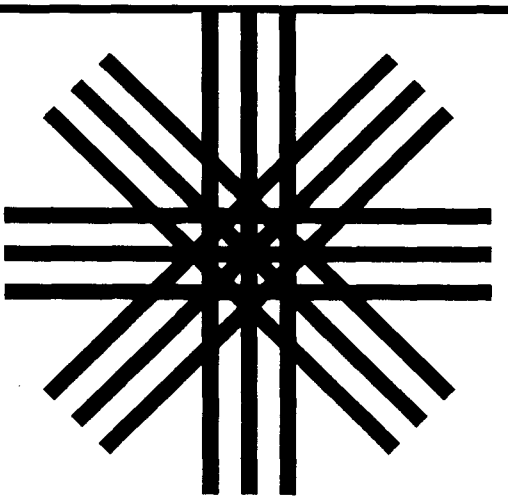
We also see social habits take sudden turns that I suspect flow from television. Suddenly, for example, people began giving other people backrubs in pretty ordinary office situations—almost always people of the opposite sex, by the way. That came from some television show, I'd be willing to bet. Nothing spreads across a culture so suddenly as a change introduced into a situation comedy, or a televized disaster (riots in Los Angeles, or the seizure of the American embassy in Iran), or a happy war, interpreted by "anchor people." The way people feel about issues ranging from abortion and euthanasia to war to people sleeping with other people to racial harmony or disharmony are all TV-driven, because this is all most of us have in common, and that is frightening. Men and women whose major concern is selling time to advertisers are the main forces in our common understanding.

This would be alarming enough, if it were not for the fact that even the best television has a way of inducing passivity, putting the imagination to sleep, and juxtaposing images in a way which is ultimately desensitizing. Not only our values are influenced by repeated exposure to behavior that most traditional religions have rejected as immoral (how many romantic interludes between married men and women are ever portrayed? and how often is violence shown as ugly and degrading, rather than thrilling?); a moment of violence (either dramatized or real, like the Rodney King beating) is followed by an ad for laxatives, then by something touching—film from a famine, for example—and then by something amusing.

There are studies that reveal the effect on children of repeated viewings of violent behavior: they react less and less, and become able to see violent behavior without being moved. In the same way, a tacit approval of sex between uncommitted, unmarried people certainly has had a cultural effect; and sex is virtually never shown as having anything to do with pregnancy and childbirth. Television sex is something that just happens to passive people, like weather.

A passivity about life is reinforced by the very physical act of watching television: we become consumers of sensations. No one seems to notice that the characters on television are usually not seen sitting around watching television; they have lives in which things other than television happen to them. This is not true of the audience, however.

Plainly more is at the base of our problems than television, but no other single factor has had a greater influence on the distorted politics under which we suffer, or a more malign effect on common values, or a more stultifying influence on our intellectual lives. It is a pleasure to live without it, and more than that. You know the old adage, "In the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is king." In the country of the TV-addicted, the abstainer at least has a slight edge on clarity. You see, at least, how odd and scary it is to live in a society whose social cohesion is based on something as shallow and manipulative as television. □

## THE GRAYMOOR PRIZE

The Friars of the Atonement announce the third annual Graymoor Prize, to be awarded to the best essay on any aspect of ecumenical or interreligious affairs. The prize is intended to encourage and support new ecumenical and interreligious ideas and perspectives. The award-winning submission, which may take the form of a scholarly or critical essay or a personal narrative, should appeal to the interests of the general educated reader.

Original and unpublished essays of approximately 2,500-4,000 words should be submitted to the editors of COMMONWEAL who will make the final decision following consultation with a panel of experts. The winning essay will receive a prize of $1,000 and will be published in COMMONWEAL. The editors reserve the right not to award the prize.

Deadline: October 1, 1992. Announcement of Prize: December 18, 1992. The prize-winning essay will be published in COMMONWEAL's January 15, 1993, issue. This essay will become the property of the Graymoor Ecumenical Institute. All other essays will be returned to their authors after January 1.

**COMMONWEAL** 15 Dutch Street New York, New York 10038




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# HOW WE LOST OUR SHIRT

## THE END OF AMERICAN ECONOMIC HEGEMONY

CHARLES K. WILBER

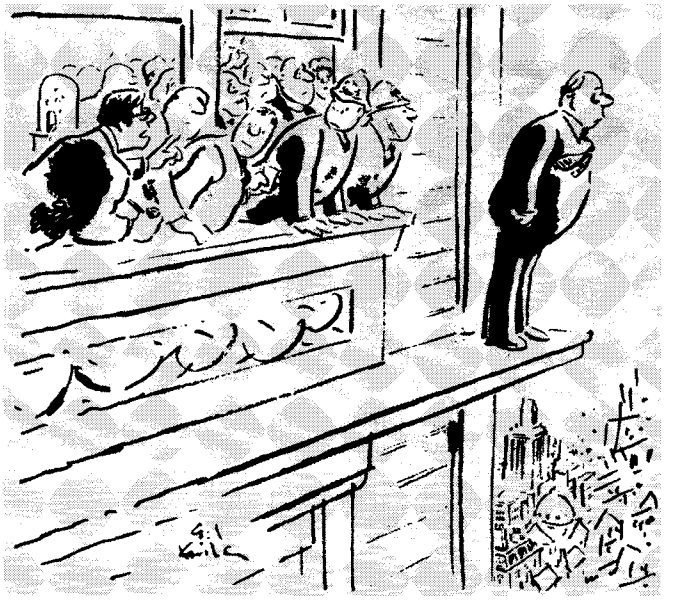
Many factors account for the problems now plaguing the U.S. economy, but dramatic changes in the international economy and the failure of U.S. economic policy to adequately respond to those changes must head the list. The world has changed fundamentally in the last two decades, from one in which the U.S. had the most productive industrial economy, and therefore the most competitive, to one where the U.S. is merely one modern industrial power among many.

From the end of World War II until 1971 the U.S. dominated the world economy in an unprecedented fashion. But now the normal development processes of industrial capitalism have spread across the globe. Dozens of national economies can compete with ours. This has forever altered the international economy from a Western system characterized by U.S. hegemony and independence to one in which the U.S. is interdependent or even dependent on other countries. The effects of this change have been profound: it has exacerbated the economic problems that originated in other areas and has further complicated economic policy. To help grasp the significance of these changes some historical perspective is necessary.

After a golden age of American economic prosperity from 1960 to 1973 (economic growth averaged 3.9 percent annually, inflation only 3.1 percent, and unemployment 4.9 percent), the American economy faced difficult times. From 1974 to 1980 the economic consensus—reached in the aftermath of the Depression, guided by Washington economic policymakers, and based on the economics of John Maynard Keynes—came apart at the seams. Economic growth fell to 2.2 percent, inflation jumped to 9.3 percent, and unemployment reached 6.8 percent.

The glue that had held the post-New Deal political-economic structure together was a social consensus based on the roles of government, business, and organized labor. Large corporations would be tolerated as long as their monopolistic power was not abused. They in turn would tolerate independent labor unions as legitimate representatives of their workers. The struggle over income shares would be institutionalized through the mechanisms of collective bargaining. Expanding aggregate demand muted that struggle by making it easy for firms to absorb wage increases through productivity gains and by passing on wage increases above productivity in the form of price increases.

Government policies provided minimum economic security through old-age benefits, unemployment insurance, minimum wage laws, and guarantees of the right of workers to organize unions. In addition, government cushioned the operation of markets by providing welfare benefits and basic education. It also had the responsibility to employ macro-stabilization policies to maintain full employment with stable prices. Finally, government was expected to establish a gen-



*"Let me through—I'm a Keynesian."*

CHARLES K. WILBER *is a professor of economics at the University of Notre Dame. He is co-author with Kenneth P. Jameson of* Beyond Reaganomics: A Further Inquiry into the Poverty of Economics *(University of Notre Dame Press). The argument in this article was first worked out with Jameson.*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eral environment that would encourage long-run economic growth. A variety of policies might be used for this purpose: support of higher education, tax incentives for investment, subsidies for scientific research.

The relationship among big government, big business, and big labor was expected to tame the destructive side of capitalism while aiding its creative side. This it did quite successfully in the post-World War II, post-Depression period. But by the mid 1970s its success declined dramatically. Our major industries—autos, steel, textiles, electronics—were routinely bested in the world marketplace by foreign firms, particularly the Japanese and Germans, and even the South Koreans and Brazilians. The rise of OPEC, with its price increases and embargoes, appeared to threaten our cheap-energy-based way-of-life. We began to worry about why our productivity growth was so slow—we who had been the world's leader! And we looked for someone to blame, usually labor, often the government, or on occasion our business firms.

In the 1970s the simultaneous appearance of high unemployment and double-digit inflation—the clearest manifestation of an economic crisis—belied the ability of prevailing economic policy to confront these new challenges. One of the most confusing realities of the 1970s was the accelerating decay of the cities and of public services in general. Despite being richer than ever, suddenly we could not afford to maintain our schools, our public transit systems started going bankrupt, and our cities fired large numbers of police officers despite rising crime rates. The troubles seemed endless.

As if this were not enough, questions of equity and freedom, which in the 1960s had largely been answered by economic success and by the movement toward the "Great Society," resurfaced with a vengeance. As the government made greater efforts to control an economy that seemed to be slipping away, it taxed more, spent more, and regulated more. This led to a reaction against government control and the "welfare state" and to a demand for greater economic freedom.

Beginning in 1980, Ronald Reagan helped to foster a powerful alternative social consensus—a return to less government and freer markets. Perhaps his greatest success was abolishing any sense of crisis, putting a "spin" on any particular economic problem that made it seem minor or could even make it disappear. Thus in November 1988 the American electorate decided to continue the same course for another four years with George Bush. Yet, when the twelve-year Reagan-Bush record is examined closely, only in the case of inflation has the underlying problem been confronted (down to a 4.7 percent annual average). Unemployment has remained high (up to an average of 7.5 percent), and productivity has not dramatically increased (1.5 percent annually compared to 2.7 percent during 1960-73 and 0.5 percent during 1974-80). A host of other problems—huge budget and trade deficits, increased poverty, and in general a prosperity haunted by structural distortions in the economy and an underclass all too often hungry and homeless—have grown despite blithe denials.

As these economic statistics indicate, America is no longer the sole master of its own economic fate. Many of the major policy developments of the 1970s which finally shattered the New Deal-Keynesian economic consensus were not taken autonomously by the U.S., but were forced on policymakers by external pressures. Two incidents stand out in this regard. The first was the August 15, 1971, decision of President Richard Nixon to remove the U.S. from the Bretton Woods fixed exchange rate system and at the same time adopt a rigid program of wage-and-price controls. The key factors in these decisions were international. For the first time the U.S. had begun to run deficits on its merchandise trade, which called into question the country's ability to redeem the massive amount of dollars that had been cycled through the international financial markets. And the Bank of England made it quite clear that it was no longer willing to absorb additional dollars to support the dollar's fixed value. Thus adjustment had to be made by the United States. This new reality forced the radical decisions which were taken and led finally to a reformulation of the manner in which the U.S. enters international capital markets.

This, in turn, had a major effect on the international economic system. International financial and commercial order is difficult to achieve among equals, and since the erosion of the United States' economic power after 1971, no single nation has been sufficiently powerful to impose order unilaterally. The breakdown of the Bretton Woods system resulted in floating exchange rates which, when coupled with recession in several major nations, posed a constant threat of an international commercial disintegration and, in turn, reinforced domestic recessionary forces.

The second case of an internationally induced domestic policy change was the revolution in interest rates which took place in 1979 when the Federal Reserve Board decided to deemphasize interest rate targets and to concentrate instead on the growth of the money supply. A key factor was the discontinuity between U.S. and international interest rates. The U. S. money supply growth rates and rates of inflation were also out of line with European countries. Paul Volcker, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, went to Europe for consultations, and largely because of the pressure and support of his counterparts, upon his return adopted the new strategy which completely changed the role of interest rates in the economy.

This tight monetary policy pushed interest rates to historic highs, but even more important it indicated to large corporations that their wage agreements with labor (and subsequent price increases) would no longer be ratified by the Federal Reserve through automatic increases in the money supply. Coupled with international competition which limited their price setting behavior, this encouraged the assault on labor unions and the wage rollbacks that were characteristic of the 1980s.

In both of these fundamental reformulations of domestic



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

economic policy, the proximate cause was the vulnerability of the U.S. economy to foreign economic pressure. One point of current debate is whether these international pressures have led to deindustrialization of the U.S. economy. Unfortunately there is no agreed-upon meaning of the concept. In terms of share of GNP, manufacturing output has remained stable since the 1970s at about 22 percent of total production. However, there have been substantial changes within the manufacturing sector—the smokestack industries have declined while the high-tech industries have increased. Moreover, there has been a marked decline of manufacturing employment from 1979 through 1990, with a net loss of over 2 million jobs. During the 1970s and 1980s, the U.S. economy was quite successful in providing other jobs as labor-force participation rates rose, especially among married women. Practically all of these jobs were in the wholesale and retail trades and in the service sector.

Certainly one factor causing this manufacturing restructuring has been foreign competition, exacerbated by the overvalued dollar. Between 1980 and 1989 manufactured imports grew rapidly—from $170 to $424 billion—while manufactured exports grew more slowly—$182 to $319 billion. The result was a change from a $12-billion export surplus of manufactured goods in 1980 to a $105-billion deficit in 1989.

But the longer-run problem is that U.S. technological dominance is also slipping; one study has found that Japan now dominates the U.S. in twenty-five of thirty-four critical new technologies. A related result of so-called deindustrialization is that a two-tiered wage system is appearing in the economy. While a substantial number of new jobs have been created during the past decade, the quality of new jobs has declined. On average the newly created jobs pay about $2 per hour less than the lost jobs. Also, these rapidly growing involuntary part-time jobs usually have fewer benefits and less security.

Not only has the new employment been largely in lower wage sectors, but the labor needs of firms within the manufacturing, service, and trade sectors have changed in response to the resulting competitive environment. The number of small low-wage firms and subcontractors has increased and the traditional large high-wage firms have resorted to using pools of low-wage labor through such schemes as wage rollbacks, two-tier wage structures for existing and new workers, and increased use of part-time and temporary workers. As a result, hourly compensation (wages plus benefits) for U.S. production workers in manufacturing has lagged to the point that in 1990 compensation in the U.S. was less than in Italy, not to mention ten other countries.

These changes have generated increasing income inequality. Labor's share of personal income fell by 3 percent between 1980 and 1990 while the share of payments to owners increased from 22.7 percent to 26.1 percent, a dramatic change in such a short period of time. In addition, these figures hide the increased inequalities in wage and salary incomes (wage rollbacks for production workers and large bonuses for managers). When changes in family income between 1977 and 1989 are looked at, the results are even more dramatic—the top 1 percent of families captured 44-70 percent, depending on definitions, of the total increase, resulting in their share of total after-tax income jumping from 7 to 12 percent. In contrast, the bottom 40 percent of families actually lost income, both relatively and absolutely.

Changes in the employment structure of the economy have created a situation where the poor have become more numerous and poorer, and where getting a job is no longer a way out of poverty—31.5 percent of all jobs in 1987 paid less than that necessary to support a family of four above the poverty line. The number of persons living below the official poverty level increased from 26.1 million in 1979 to 32.5 million in 1987, a jump from 11.7 to 13.5 percent of the population. That rate was only prevented from going higher because most poor households now have multiple wage earners. This is the basis for talk about the "New Poor" and the "Underclass."

The stagnation of the industrial labor market is the result of changes in the structure of the international economy. The rebuilding of Europe and Japan and the industrialization of Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Brazil, among others, led to massive shifts in competitiveness in the world economy. These developments in relative economic strength were exacerbated by the instability in exchange rates which greatly affected international competitiveness from one year to the next. Since the most advanced technology was eagerly pursued by the new industrializing nations everywhere in the world, the old industrial centers, including the U.S., found themselves at a competitive disadvantage with their older plant and equipment and higher labor costs. The result was the closing of U.S. industrial plants or their relocation overseas, especially in the period before 1985 when the dollar was overvalued.

Large U.S. corporations could no longer insulate themselves from international competition and market forces. This in turn contributed to the corporations' assault on wages and on unions. The significant loss of well-paying industrial jobs is one major effect of the loss of U.S. hegemony and the naive approach to international competition that has been followed by the Reagan and Bush administrations. Possibly the most dangerous legacy, however, is the twin deficits, the massive federal budget deficit and the foreign trade deficit.

In 1980 the federal deficit was $74 billion and the national debt was $914 billion; by 1992 the deficit was estimated to be $260 billion and the debt had risen to over $4 trillion. In 1980 the U.S. had a surplus of $32 billion in its trade in goods and services. Through the 1980s this surplus changed to a deficit, rising to $115 billion in 1987 before falling back to $38 billion in 1990.

Looking at the foreign exchange value of the dollar helps



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to explain the connection between the deficits. The federal deficit has to be financed. The federal government finances the deficit by selling bonds to whomever will buy them—banks, insurance companies, pension funds, rich individuals, the Federal Reserve, and foreigners. The federal government competes for the same loanable funds used by business firms to finance investment projects and private households to finance home mortgages.

If domestic sources of loanable funds are not sufficient to cover both private and public needs then international sources are necessary. But foreigners must purchase dollars first to buy the government bonds. As we rely more and more on foreigners to finance the government debt, the demand for dollars grows, driving up the exchange value of the dollar relative to foreign currencies. However, this makes imported goods cheaper and exported goods more expensive, with the result that imports increase and exports decrease, thus, enlarging the trade deficit. Thus the federal deficit is an important factor in the trade deficit.

This heavy borrowing from abroad, necessary to finance the ballooning federal deficit, has transformed the U.S. from the world's largest creditor in 1982 to the largest debtor nation in the world, with a net asset balance of -$368 billion in 1987. This will represent an additional drain over time with some estimating that payments on interest alone soon may reach over $50 billion a year. In the first quarter of 1988, for the first time in the postwar period, the U.S. had a deficit on its investment income.

The dramatic increase in the federal budget deficit was the direct result of the 1982 income tax reductions coupled with the Reagan defense buildup. In the late 1970s Arthur Laffer argued that the supply-side effects of a tax rate cut would so stimulate the economy that tax revenues would fall little if any. At the time there was very little empirical evidence that this policy would work. However it made a great political gambit: we could have our cake and eat it too. David Stockman, once famously of the Office of Management and Budget, found that when these expenditure and taxation plans were fed into the Congressional Budget Office model, the results were unacceptable (budget deficits of $70 and $80 billion). Finally, he teamed up with aide Lawrence Kudlow to construct what was described as "a framework for constructing general economic 'scenarios.'" The various assumptions in the "framework" apparently produced what Stockman had been after—the conclusion that implementation of the Reagan program would lead to growth of 4 percent per year and, by 1983, a balanced budget with inflation of 5 percent. Including these claims as assumptions, however, was far from providing evidence, and the economy has paid the price for such sleight-of-hand.

In addition, there was a concealed political agenda, one that would force Congress to enact the Reagan administration's plan to curb domestic social spending. Stockman quickly recognized that the economics were flawed. For public consumption he touted the supply-side economic models; privately he admitted that "to balance the budget we would need huge spending cuts too—more than $100 billion per year. The fabled feedback of the Laffer curve (lowered tax rates produce more tax revenues) had thus slid into the grave of fiscal mythology forty days after the supply-side banner had been hoisted up at the G.O.P. Convention." Stockman's solution was to create a fiscal crisis. The resulting deficits would force Congress to "turn against their own handiwork—the bloated budget of the American welfare state. Why would they do this? Because they had to! In the final analysis, I had made fiscal necessity the mother of political invention."

Congress did cut social welfare programs; however, defense grew rapidly, Social Security was political dynamite, and interest on the public debt was uncontrollable. The result was rising fiscal deficits that kept real interest rates high and contributed to the overvaluation of the dollar on the international economy through 1985 with, as I've already indicated, resultant enormous trade deficits. The later fall in the dollar has not solved the trade deficits because the commercial markets lost at the time of the over-priced dollar have been extremely difficult to reclaim.

More important, it has become political suicide to attempt to lower the deficit through raising taxes or reducing politically popular programs such as Social Security. "Read my lips: No new taxes," said George Bush en route to winning the presidency in 1988. As a result, fiscal flexibility has been lost, and future adjustment of fiscal policy to new economic conditions will be quite difficult if not impossible.

These twin deficits seriously distort a fragile economy. After promising to reduce the size of budget deficits, the Reagan and Bush administrations have presided over unprecedented increases. Fiscal deficits that averaged 0.9 percent of GNP from 1961 to 1970, increased to an average of 2.4 percent from 1971 to 1980, and to 4.1 percent between 1981 and 1990. Keynesian theory had suggested that budget deficits could offset the cyclical behavior of the economy, and that the budget should be balanced over the cycle, with surpluses in boom years offsetting deficits in downturns. But this is no longer possible; only greater or lesser deficits are possible.

Sadly, but one hopes not fatally, the U.S. has failed to come to terms with its loss of hegemony in the international economy and the resulting collapse of the New Deal-Keynesian consensus. This failure has resulted in large fiscal and trade deficits, deindustrialization of the domestic economy with an attendant two-tiered wage structure, and growing inequality and poverty. In this presidential year various candidates—Bush, Governor Bill Clinton, and H. Ross Perot—all have economic programs, including proposals to increase international competitiveness by raising productivity as a way to restore our lost international hegemony. I will evaluate these proposals in a future article. □

EDITORS' NOTE: *The second part of this article will appear in the October 9, 1992, issue of* Commonweal.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# WHEN YOU STOP, YOU DIE

## THE HUMAN TOLL OF MALE UNEMPLOYMENT

THOMAS J. COTTLE

It goes without saying that a man's work is essential to his identity. The little boy grows up knowing that someday he will have a job like his daddy or mommy. It is expected, moreover, that he will make something of his life, which he will do by working. It all begins with adults asking him that fateful question: What are you going to be when you grow up?

Because it is only "natural" that men work, there can be no preparation for unemployment; it overtakes the entire being of a man. Indeed, it is this seemingly "inbred" assumption of working that makes long-term unemployment so drastic and traumatic for many men. Accordingly, it is not merely that a man assumes he will work until retirement, or that he trembles at the sound of the numbers describing a gloomy economic landscape. Rather, he believes that no matter what the personal exigencies and national statistics, no matter what the talk in the bars or the reports on television, he will be going to work the next morning.

Americans presently confront a dismal employment scene. In every quarter of the economy, small businesses and individuals are filing for bankruptcy in record numbers, large corporations are announcing unprecedented quarterly losses and laying off thousands of workers. Men who once ran six-figure businesses stand in unemployment lines alongside people who, two months earlier, were in their employ. Where unemployment hasn't hit, the threat of it fills the air.

For more than fifteen years I have been meeting with the families of the hard-core unemployed. These are people where the main provider has been out of work for at least six months, and usually much longer. The stories of these families inevitably are saddening since the longer a man goes without a job, the greater the likelihood he gives up hope of ever being re-employed. The government calls people out of work longer than six months "discouraged workers." In truth, most of them have moved far beyond anything resembling mere discouragement.

One of the more painful aspects of the unemployed man's existence is the daily obligation to answer a host of questions, each one, surely, feeling like a knife to the ribs: "Hey, Fred, how come you're home? What'd you do, take an early retirement? Somebody in your house hit the lottery?"

"Sam, would you be insulted if I gave you a little something? Come on, I've always got a little extra around the house. You'd do it for me."

"What are are you going to do, Brian, sit there doing nothing? The worst thing, believe me, is to sit there not moving. I know. I had an uncle once, didn't work for a helluva lot longer than you've been out of commission. Believe me, you don't move, you'll die sitting there in that chair."

Hearing this last remark, Brian McShane, fifty-one years old and out of work thirty-nine months—and don't think he ever stopped keeping track—looked at me and grinned. It was as if he wanted to say, You see, Doc, what I have to put up with every day. In fact he did reply:

"Toonie O'Neill, meet Dr. Tom Cottle." Brian looked at me. "I've known Toonie forty years, if I've known him a day. We were working pretty regular in those days. Hell, I was twelve years old. Life was filled with possibilities.

"Dr. Tom's studying guys like me, out-of-work guys, you know what I mean? Not like you, Toones. And he's got something important to tell you." Brian winked in my direction and grinned.

I rose from my chair to shake Toonie O'Neill's hand, which was broad and rough. "Tell him what, Mac?" I asked.

"Come on, you know. Tell him." Brian McShane was nei-

*"No one else would, so Arnold decided to accept the responsibility for unemployment."*

THOMAS J. COTTLE *is a sociologist and clinical psychologist affiliated with the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology; his books include* Children's Secrets; Private Lives and Public Accounts; *and* Hidden Survivors.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ther an old or close friend, but I knew him well enough to know how furious he had been made to feel by the suggestion that he should just get up out of his chair. "You're the doctor, so you tell him. Tell him he hit the nail right on the head. Tell him the reason I don't get out of this chair is because there isn't a reason in the world good enough to get me out of this chair. And if he's worried that I might die sitting here, tell him he ain't more worried about it than I am. I know I'm going to die in this chair. Tell him I wanna die in this chair. Tell him that's the way I'm coping with being unemployed for forever now. Go ahead, Doc, tell him. He'll listen to you. Tell him this is the way I'm coping with a story that's got a lousy ending."

Driving home that afternoon, I found myself thinking about the death of my father. I recalled a family friend visiting him in the hospital months before my father actually died. The friend, a psychiatrist, was upset by my father's weakening condition. My mother was eager to get a psychological reading on my father. "He's very depressed, isn't he?" she asked, almost rhetorically. "Not at all," the friend answered with uncharacteristic sternness, as if he wished to protect my father's reputation. "He's not depressed at all; he's dying!"

Suddenly, my visits with unemployed men began coalescing around that single theme. People like Brian McShane weren't feeling sorry for themselves. Technically, probably, many of them could have been diagnosed as depressed, but that wasn't the point. They were dying men, they even spoke of it. Forty-seven-year-old George Wilkinson had said it this way: "There's only two worlds: Either you work every day in a normal nine-to-five job with a couple weeks vacation, or you're dead! There's no in-between....Working is breathing. It's something you don't think about; you just do it and it keeps you alive. When you stop you die." A year after uttering these words, George Wilkinson, once a manager of a small tool company, killed himself with a shotgun.

Each man I spoke with knew it as clearly as a man knows it when a doctor tells him he has only a few weeks to live. It also struck me that the ones who had disappeared, usually after years of being unemployed—and there were many of them—went away to die. They were like weary elephants looking for the burial ground. In almost atavistic fashion, they knew it was not meant for them to die at home.

Gradually, I began to see my research on unemployed families in a wholly different light. I hadn't been speaking with so-called discouraged workers only; I had been speaking with people mourning their deaths, and lives. For me to ask them about their childhoods, their remembrances of early career aspirations and evaluations of their lives, had become an opportunity for them to write their memoirs, to compose their own obituaries. Their discussions of educational and employment experiences and philosophies of living were all part of this final self-assessment and remembrance. The longer my final account of them, the more they believed I had found their life to have merit.

Although it sounds melodramatic, I had come to feel there was little difference between my visits to the homes of unemployed families and the visits one pays to terminally-ill people. They know why we come, and still it is always they who help us through the ordeal of conversing. "You want to know how much time they're giving me?" dying friends have asked me. I want to respond, I do, and I don't. I don't know what we should be talking about. And they're saying, "We should be talking about you and me and about living and dying." The unemployed men were telling me this same thing: We should be talking about you and me; about working and not working; about living and dying.

I recall something thirty-one-year-old Johnnie Nobles said when we were trying to reconstruct his father's life. John Nobles, Sr., had spent the last years of his life unemployed: "There are things, Tom, that make you an expert. But you aren't an expert on this. No one would have called my father an expert, but he was. Every man's an expert on what not working does to him. The priest tells you about death? He doesn't know about death. He's just heard about death. He may give last rites to the dying, but that's as close as he'll ever come. He hasn't touched anything there; he's just present at the dying. That's his job, right?

"My father and his friends, they could tell you about death. They could tell you about jobs, too. They could tell you about the last bits of life seeping out of your body when you don't have a job. Because you know how you know if a man's an expert? You listen to him, and you watch him, and something inside you says, this guy knows what he's talking about. He's not making this stuff up. He hasn't just heard about this; he's lived this. He's telling you the truth as he lived it, and never forgot it. That's what makes a guy an expert."

I thought of Johnnie's words months later when I listened to Gerry Murphy's description of himself. Fifty-six-years old, Gerry is one of America's atomic veterans. He once took pride in his ability to sell almost any product: "I want to work. I don't think I'm unable to do anything....[But] I'm told that I'm unemployable.... I don't seem to have any concentration.... I couldn't sit in one place at one thing for an hour.... I've been lost in the general scheme of things.... I don't even know what I'm doing, you know? I'm just what they call 'free falling.' There's no plans or anything. I used to try to make plans; there's no concentration. I feel like I'm in a fog. I have been called a vegetable. I don't read the newspaper. I try. It's just that I can't really concentrate. I used to."

In the first months following their layoffs, I heard any number of protestations, particularly in conversations while in line at unemployment offices. The men spewed vitriol at the state and federal governments for letting them down and abandoning them. America's workers were innocent victims. They had worked regular shifts, rarely taken days off, rarely came late; no question about it. It was the government or the company or



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the economy that was at fault. Like a chorus, the other men shouted out: "Damn straight," "You got that right," "Better believe it."

I recall a morning when Jack Blum, a man who had held numerous jobs in his forty-six years, looked about at the unemployment lines and observed: "I'm at the bottom and nobody likes it at the bottom. But okay, somebody's got to be at the bottom. Poor people, all walks of life, ethnic types, black, white: you don't make money, down to the bottom! Here's the real melting pot of this country."

Then there was that refrain about the government "taking my taxes for thirty years, and now they claim they've run out of benefits at twenty-six or thirty weeks!" More recently, I have heard: "The government bailed the S and L boys out of trouble with our money, but bail us out when we didn't break a single law, didn't make one wrong decision, how do you explain that one!"

Men like forty-nine-year-old Amos Payton, an unemployed cement worker, rode their anger as though life itself drew electricity from it: "'Fraid of getting angry, and getting angry 'cause I get afraid. Hell, man, afraid of not being angry no more....Anger and fear, they're gonna keep you alert, like an animal. Got to keep on the prowl." (During one of his many angry moods, Jack Blum had told me: "The day that anger stops, like a motor, I'm dead. Kaput. Good-bye.")

Somewhere around the first anniversary of their unemployment, as it became clear that they might never again locate steady work, the tone of the men's conversations shifted. Rather than direct their anger outward at former bosses or the government, they turned it inward, portraying themselves as wrongdoers, transgressors, people who had committed grievous offenses. In this regard, no one could assault Amos Payton as he himself did. Whatever the topic, Payton could turn it back on himself in devastating terms: "But some black men found work. Even if they have 20 percent unemployed, they still have 80 percent employed, and a lot of that 80 percent is black, ain't they? So lots of men living right in this community may be in the same boat I am, but most of 'em ain't! There is someone to blame, and you don't need the police to find him.... A man like me wants to yell out, it's somebody else's fault. But it's my fault."

In time the men's anger receded, as though their bodies could no longer supply the strength that anger requires. Whereas anger once may have been a life force, it now made them weary. In its place was born an intensity of shame I hadn't before witnessed. Men with whom I had established close friendships suddenly were afraid to be seen. Men who had spoken with a characteristic toughness months before, now seemed embarrassed by my visits. They began hiding, masking feelings, running away from it all, and not surprisingly, canceling our appointments more frequently.

They turned away from their families as well. Their masculinity and strength sapped, they appeared shameful, childlike, as if they deserved to be the invisible, reclusive people they in fact had become. Covering their faces, their tracks, their own life stories, they acted out the parts of men

ashamed of themselves and of the utter mess they insisted they had made of their lives. Jack Blum joked that shame and guilt were his middle names: "I'm the captain of the ship, right? I drown, it's my fault. That woman and those two kids upstairs..., they drown, that's also my fault. So maybe I'm also a murderer, huh? You want to think about this thing that way? I kill me, my wife, and kids, and they don't even know they're being murdered."

The men's shame often emerged as anger directed at their children: "What the hell you looking at? If you want a show, go watch television!" And early on, the children learned not to talk about the unemployment situation, and never to question their dads about it.

The origin of these emotions is obvious. A man is supposed to hold down a steady job. According to traditional values, this is all a man is meant to do. George Wilkinson said it this way: "Men leave in the morning and come back at night with a pay check in their hand. Makes me old-fashioned? Then I'm old- fashioned!" Believing this, it is understandable that a man would come home at the end of a day expecting dinner to be waiting for him, and the children, already bathed, ready for a little play and their nightly bedtime routine. The pattern, I suppose, bespeaks a form of chauvinism. But for centuries, men have been taught that eight or ten hours of steady work entitles them to this form of human compensation.

Similarly, when a man loses his job he loses his status in his home. He feels he has no right to be there. He cannot face his wife without a job; he hasn't earned his keep or his place. And there is no longer reason for his child to feel proud of him. "I'm sick of looking at you, sitting there," Dorie McShane yelled at Brian one afternoon, unaffected by my presence in their home. "You're a miserable sight.... I don't want to come home anymore and have you be the first thing I see."

There were no more painful words than those of Rosemary Mullen, desperate to vent her frustration with her husband: "He should have taken me somewhere, thrown me down, slapped me if that was the only thing that would have quieted me, and made love to me. I mean pull my clothes off and rape me, if he had to. Anything to show me he wasn't scared,



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that he was alive, that he had some energy left; something, some little bit of life. I mean it. I wanted to be roughed up that night and feel that he was really a man. But he was dead."

At times the men did fight back, hardly valiantly, but they tried. Still, their shame, guilt, and depression precluded much of a battle. To their wives they said, if you can't stand the sight of me you can always leave. But the words were the antithesis of what they all knew to be the truth: They feared being abandoned by their families, despite the belief that they deserved no less a punishment.

In writing about the nature of work, sociologist Kai Erikson has remarked: "High rates of unemployment are thought to be not only inevitable but *natural*" [my emphasis]. Indeed, throughout the literature of economic theory, one finds the terms, "natural rates" of unemployment and "noninflationary full-employment rates," terms all meant to disguise an ideological bias: namely, that for our economy to work well, a certain number of people must be out of work. These unemployed are the people André Gorz called the "nonclass of nonworkers."

As much as the men with whom I visited struggled to maintain control of their lives and destinies, in the end, economic and market forces, along with human decisions, combined to break them down, and in some instances to kill them. Nothing hurt Brian McShane, George Wilkinson, or Amos Payton as much as experts debating the pros and cons of unemployement policies, arguing for the necessity of a certain base rate of unemployment. Nothing disturbed them more than experts rejoicing in the downturn of unemployment rates when each one knew that even 2 percent or 3 percent unemployment means that millions of human beings may be suffering as they were.

Like sociologists, the unemployed understand the implications of government work policies. Reading labor reports and newspaper accounts, they hunt for the humanity that often gets lost in discussions of unemployment, for something they themselves long ago had lost, and now are convinced they may never regain. How many times did I find myself listening to the lamentations and expressions of incredulity of strong, articulate, even eloquent people who believed fiercely in the goodness of America, but who now could neither fathom nor reconcile the idea of their country forsaking them, given the dues—in all meanings of that word—they had paid?

Ultimately, the men hunted for a single reason to keep going, and despaired over the fact that the existence of the wives and children they so adored no longer sufficed as that reason. They remained keenly aware of the huge numbers of unemployed Americans, a network one imagines they found to be a rather sacred congregation. "Lost sheep," Jack Blum had called them. "And all of them," George Wilkinson used to say, shaking his head so that his yellow silver hair fell over his forehead, "could be saved." □

## ART

# THE VISION OF MANTEGNA

## CAPACIOUS, COMPLEX & WHOLE

Andrea Mantegna (c.1431-1506) was the most skillful practitioner of the illusionist perspective known as *di sotto in sù*, or "from the bottom looking up." The virtuoso technique epitomizes the nature of Quattrocento art. It expresses a pious surrender to transcendent truth as well as a transcendent pride in the ability to depict piety; an inspiration drawn from religious faith combined with a worldly playfulness about the dramatic possibilities of that faith; both the mystery of human psychology confronted by eternity and the human proportions devoutly imposed on eternity by ambitious human minds. With his rationalism shading into mysticism, and his mysticism sometimes disturbingly appealing to the rational, Mantegna is a representative figure of the best Italian art in the fifteenth century. Yet his disjunctions, his cerebral games, and his ironic juxtapositions of different levels of meaning ally him in certain ways to our sensibility.

Mantegna was born in Padua, a center of humanist learning and investigation. It was a place rich with associations extending in several fertile directions. The ruin-dotted city dated back to Roman times. Livy had been born there, and Petrarch had lived in Padua toward the end of his life. Artistically, the city boasted Giotto's frescoes in the Arena Chapel, whose emotional and psychological expressiveness form a line of inheritance through Masaccio and Donatello to Mantegna. During Mantegna's youth, Padua was one of the spots where the Franciscan revivalist, Bernardino of Siena, delivered his sermons.

Perhaps it is no wonder that Mantegna chose the motto *Nihil stabile est nisi divinus* to embellish a depiction of Saint Sebastian, as if he aspired to an art as immutable as divinity, a fixed synthesis of the whirl of diverse realities he experienced. Making harmonious a fast-changing world that their curiosity and sometimes ruthless will kept pulling to pieces anyway was, indeed, the aim of many Renaissance figures. The idea of the individual stretched before them like the Mediterranean that had opened out before the ancient Greeks, tugging at the boundaries of their inner lives.

But this vigorous new individuality rested on a bedrock of faith whose substance struggled between rich malleability and decline. In the Renaissance, the peak of Catholic tradition and the beginnings of a secular world briefly and gracefully mingled together in the arts. By Mantegna's time, a flux of history had pushed the representation of holy images into a busy ferment of personal styles. Later, aesthetic innovation, scientific skepticism, and the stirrings of a modern psychology would eventually break the sacred frame of ref-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

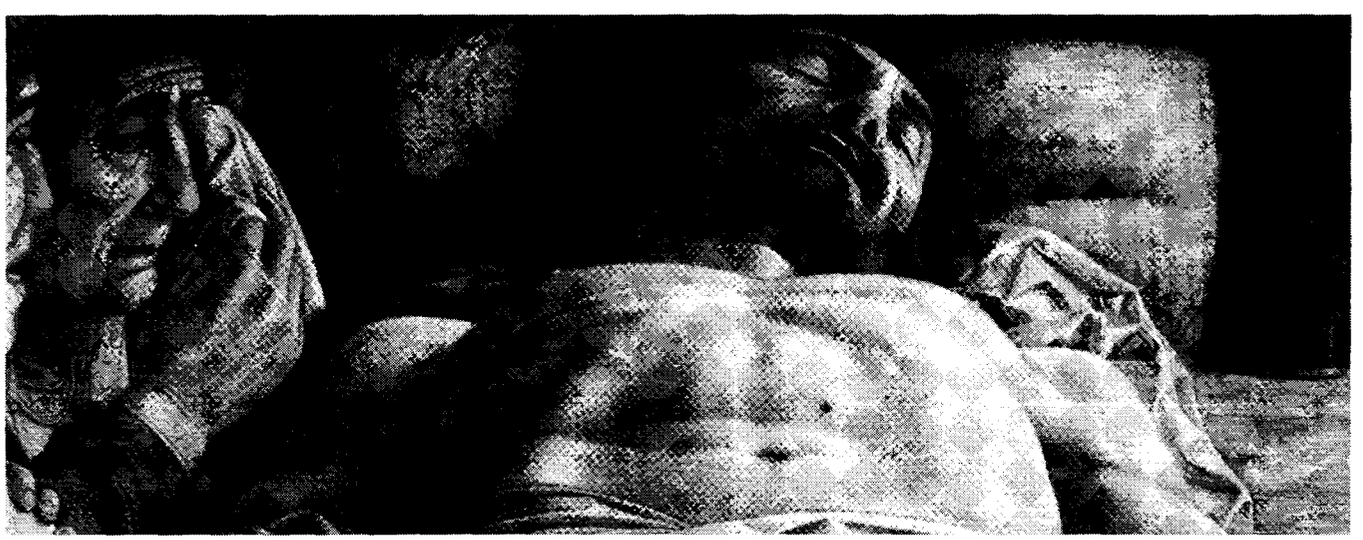
erence. But up until the end of the Renaissance, scientific advances in painterly perspective deepened religious awe; pagan motifs grounded Christianity in history; psychology reincarnated Christ a second time in the individual imagination; and cynicism toward papal political power put a greater responsibility on Christian artists to interpret matters of the soul.

More than other artists of his time, Mantegna's ability to encompass and toy with all this complexity guaranteed his place in posterity even during his life. Yet debate over his qualities as an artist has steadily lapped at the edges of his reputation. From the beginning of his career, some of his contemporaries complained about his figures' sculptural heaviness and criticized him for his meticulous concern with ancient archaeological detail. Scholars have squabbled back and forth ever since, Mantegna's harshest critic being Bernard Berenson, for whom Mantegna's figures "were made of colored marble rather than of flesh and blood." The Metropolitan Museum of Art's current exhibition (May 7-July 12) is necessarily limited in scope—some masterpieces were too fragile to travel and others are frescoed onto Italian walls and ceilings—and it won't put an end to a disagreement that is rooted in the insolubilities of taste. But it might convince some people that Mantegna's so-called flaws really make up the essence of his genius. And like all good retrospectives, or in this case semispectives, the show is to some extent a feat of translation, from a distant to a contemporary idiom.

Mantegna is related to us as a sort of kindred opposite. Grounded in a symbolic tradition, he could still express the particularity of his individual impulses; in our culture, a hyperindividualism thins out reality as it turns mere individual impulses into universal symbols. In his *The Man of Sorrows with Two Angels* (c.1500), we can catch Mantegna's resourceful irony and wit as they echo almost unheard around his devotional ardor. The painting depicts the risen Christ seated on an ancient sarcophagus, supported by two singing angels, a seraph with red wings and robe and a cherub with blue. On Christ's left looms Golgotha and its three crosses, and on his right two Holy Women make their way from a walled city past three shepherds to the tomb on Easter morning. In the background, night breaks up into dark wispy clouds as a new sky rises on a sea of golden light.

From this deeply felt devotional dimension, however, Mantegna crosses the threshold of still another reality. Christ's hands are turned outward, their stigmata showing, and behind the wound in his left hand appears a gaping quarry in the side of the rock at the base of the Golgothan hill. Outside the quarry a group of artisans are hard at work. Three maneuver a marble slab, two measure the shaft of a column, and one carves a half-finished marble figure. The entire painting suddenly turns daringly from the reverential to the intellectual and then to the highly idiosyncratic. On one level, we have a powerful expression of the mystical paradox and pathos of the risen Christ. On a second level there is something like an allegory of creation conflated with the sacred significance of the scene: the trees sprouting from the crevices in the hill, with their triads of branches, are like nature degenerating into the death-world crosses of Golgotha; while the marble figure, the column, and the slab represent eternal life retrieved from death by the artist's hands. That transformation literally climbs to its apotheosis in Christ's figure in the foreground, in which the miraculous event of his Resurrection converges with the event of its artistic representation.

But Mantegna's most audacious meaning in this work is his most personal one. At this late date in his career, the prickly artist was keenly aware of the general criticism that his figures were too "stony." In placing the opening in the rock just behind Christ's stigmatum, and fashioning his allegory of creation between them, Mantegna made his reply. This, after all, was an artist who complained bitterly about the envious machinations of others, and painted the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian no less than three times. Yet Mantegna's self-expression bows before a universal condition. The dark burn remaining on Christ's face from his years of wandering and preaching, in stark contrast to his body's marmoreal whiteness, startlingly thrusts at the viewer the





LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vulnerability that is in all mortal things.

In his representations of archaeological detail, Mantegna paid special tribute to the religious symbolism that gave Renaissance artists the freedom to be provocatively, capaciously complex and at the same time coherent and whole. Part of his fascination with ancient ruins came from Leon Battista Alberti, whose revolutionary treatise, *On Painting*, urged artists to follow nature's models and the examples of antiquity. When, in 1460, Mantegna moved from Padua to the refined humanistic court of the Gonzagas at Mantua, his path must have crossed that of Alberti, who visited the city several times. The older man would certainly have admired what Mantegna had made of his advice. By using *di sotto in sù* in his portrayals of ancient ruins in the background of Christian scenes, Mantegna pointedly puts antiquity above eye-level; he projects the past into the future, thus using pagan finitude to prove a Christian eternity.

In the magnificent *Death of the Virgin* (c.1460), perhaps Mantegna's finest work, subtle references to fragments and ruins ring a remarkable variation on the theme of time. In the way he captures the movement of a ball of incense that an apostle swings over the Virgin's body as it lies on a bier, Mantegna represents a living moment of earthly temporality in the midst of a tableau symbolizing eternal duration. A tall brass candlestick's horizontal edge divides another apostle's face in half, seemingly hiding his eyes from the viewer's eyes. Or is it the viewer's eyes that are obscured from the apostle's by the top of the candlestick, which is shaped like an upside-down halo, the very image of encumbering mortality? Bedeviled by the same obstacle the viewer and the apostle uncannily share the same experience. Finitude and infinity shift and change places like buildings in an earthquake. To complicate matters even further, the sandaled feet of yet another apostle appear under the bier alongside the brass feet of the candlestick. It is as if the entire sacred scene were in the process of becoming a ruin, as majestic and indisputably present as the vestiges of the Roman past that surrounded every Italian.

Mantegna's adeptness at blending together different levels of Renaissance reality—the pagan and the Christian, the cerebral and the spiritual, the scientific and the religious, the cynical and the devout—gives his work its disorienting, haunting quality. The figures in *The Infant Redeemer* (c.1455-60), *Virgin and Child* (c.1465-70), and *Christ the Redeemer* (1493), bring divinity disconcertingly close and make humanity mysteriously sublime. Mantegna's pictures in grisaille, where he recreates bronze and marble reliefs in paint, his evocations of music, his use of writing and theatrical narrative in his work—all this makes him positively Wagnerian in the way he sought to combine the arts and then to bury his technique in the power of his representations. Of his time and yet beyond it—like his favorite perspective trick—he was a master of the significant fragment for the sake of an unexpected unity

LEE SIEGEL

*Lee Siegel, a frequent contributor to* Commonweal, *is a free-lance writer living in New York.*

## SCREEN

# LEAST MOBILE OF MASKS

## ALBERT FINNEY IN 'THE PLAYBOYS'

A certain general was extolling the patriotism of a certain courtier to the last emperor of the Austro-Hungarians. Franz Josef listened with tacit, fuming impatience as his officer went on and on about X's faithfulness, devotion to the church, coolness under fire, contempt for the Prussians, etc., etc., until his majesty finally exploded, "Dammit, man, I know the fellow's a patriot! But what I want to know is... *Is he a patriot for me?"*

That's the way actors consider scripts. So the script has graceful dialogue? So this film will lay bare the central concerns of our era? So the story has the most surefire plot construction since *The Maltese Falcon*? So?...so what? "Dammit, man, I know this is a great script! *But is there a great part for me*?!" And, if the part is right, it doesn't matter if the script is, in all other respects, wrong.

I'm glad this is the case. If actors were fussy about the overall worth of projects, we would be without some indelible performances in otherwise delible pictures: Robert Shaw's blue-eyed assassin in *From Russia, With Love*, Nick Nolte's Neal Cassady in *Heart Beat*, Jill Bennett's angina-ridden aunt in *The Nanny*, and Robert De Niro's delicately shaded Monroe Starr in the mummified adaptation of *The Last Tycoon*.

Or Albert Finney's Brendan Hegarty in *The Playboys*.

Even if some artistic guardian angel had been at Finney's elbow as the actor read through the script by Gilles Mackinnon and Shane Connaughton about a young Irishwoman of the late 1950s disrupting her village—first by having an illegitimate baby whose father she won't marry or even reveal, and then by falling for a young actor of a traveling troupe—what good would it have done for the angel to warn Finney? He could only have whispered that the script let no cliché about the Irish go idle. That it contained a jeering gossip calling after the heroine in the street, "Who be the father of your babe?" That the priest who chides the girl in church longs for her (what else!) on the sly. That the florid actor-manager, when pestered by his leading man for wages, gestures towards his caravan and declaims, "When I retire, all this will be yours!"—a line that will be finished by wiseacres in the audience before the dependent clause is out of Milo O'Shea's mouth. That the romantic leads meet cute, Irish-fashion, when the boy tries to steal a chicken from the girl's coop. And as for sheer physical believability, try this: the heroine, at the back of the theater tent, peers through an opening in the canvas, and her future boyfriend, performing on stage sixty feet away with an electric spotlight shining in his eyes, spies her eyeball peeking at him from the outer noc-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

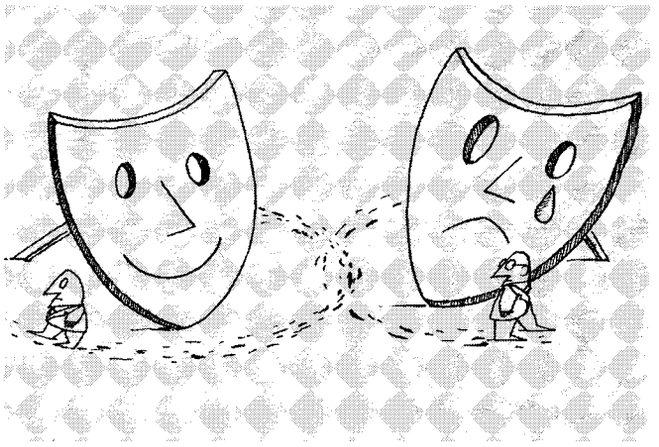
turnal darkness and identifies her immediately. And, the angel might whisper, after *The Quiet Man*, do we really need another Irish movie in which the antagonists duke it out in front of the entire village.

Bootless would be such counsel. For Finney wasn't reading for freshness of story or language. He had his mind's eye fixed on one character: Brendan the village's policeman; Brendan the ex-boozer who keeps a full bottle of whiskey in the cupboard, stares at it from time to time, but won't drink it; Brendan, who bellows at the girl who refuses to marry him, "It doesn't matter that you don't love me, I love you!"; Brendan, who fills to bursting his uniform with an ox-like frame and has developed a glare that could freeze Teamster pickets at a hundred yards, but is only really happy sitting at his woodworking bench and carving a cradle; Brendan, who has enough hate in him to frame his rival in love for an IRA bombing but wilts under his beloved's glare when she demands that the boy go free. Finney, with visions of Emil Jannings, Charles Laughton, Victor McLaglen, and every other masochistic brute in cinema history dancing in his head, knew exactly what he wanted to do with Brendan and went right ahead and did it.

And the performance is a masterpiece, a subtle masterpiece even, an example of achieving maximum force with minimal means. Of all great actors, Finney has the least mobile of masks. Its very fixity transfixes you. And in *The Playboys*, that strange negative gift is worked to its absolute limit. Playing a man who absolutely cannot express his tender side and who paralyzes the woman he loves with fear and distaste, Finney so strictly tightens the muscles in his face and so thoroughly damps down the light in his eyes that any expression that flits across his countenance seems like an obscene confession. But notice the split-second grin that Finney flashes when he and his rival finally face off at the end and put up their fists: *Ah, at last here is something I know how to do and enjoy*. By contrast, there's an earlier moment when the girl, with Brendan's unspoken permission, sets her lover free from the lock-up and whisks him past the policeman and outside. With his massive arms hanging impotently at his sides, Finney blankly gazes after the lovers until they're out of sight, sags his body slightly to the left, and lets his frozen face go slack. The effect is of an oak teetering.

The rest of the movie has a jolly, charming staleness that is mitigated by the filmmakers' knack for steering certain scenes just a bit aslant their clichéd destinations. For instance, when the first television ever seen in the village is installed in the pub, one anticipates the scenes of everyone crowding in to stare at the novelty, but the kicker comes when the villagers, having been hypnotized by slick Hollywood movies on the set all afternoon *and* having seen *Gone With the Wind* at the local movie house that same day, are still content to watch the Playboys do the Margaret Mitchel story in an egregious improvised production that can't even get the plot straight.

Another instance: trying to smuggle some pigs past a local patrolman into Northern Ireland, the heroine offers the official a cash bribe. We can predict that he'll take it, but a nice touch is added: he also extracts one of the porkers from her truck. This cop may be a corrupt official but he's a local boy, too, who recognizes good stock when he sees it.



This Irish movie has non-Irish actors in the three leads. Finney is English, of course, and two Americans play the lovers. Aiden Quinn, though working very hard at elfish smiles and a believable brogue, is somehow less convincing here on the sod of his ancestors than when he played a patient Jewish father in *Avalon*. Robin Wright has an exceptionally believable accent and a winning manner as the unwed beauty.

But just mentally subtract Finney from this movie and sew in any merely competent actor that comes to mind and you will realize that without this powerhouse performance holding it up, *The Playboys* would stand about as firm as an empty cellophane bag caught in a gale coming off the Irish Sea in mid-January.

RICHARD ALLEVA

## STAGE

# CARDBOARD COLUMBUS

'THE INSIDE STORY' & 'THE OUTSIDE'

The Bread and Puppet Theater is thirty years old this year. Columbus's discovery of America is five hundred years old. The two anniversaries have come together in *Christopher Columbus: A New World Order*, a traveling production which I saw in Philadelphia early in May. It is played in two parts—*The Inside Story* and *The Outside Story*—which have little to do with the hidden and the surface accounts of Columbus's adventures; the titles designate where the parts are performed. *The Inside Story* was presented at The Painted Bride Art Center, the city's most imaginative venue for music, dance, and performance art. *The Outside Story* took place on the grounds of the Miquon School, an experimental school which was having a birthday of its own—its sixtieth.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is the revisionist Columbus that we get from Bread and Puppet, the colonialist who brings civilization (i.e., destruction) to the indigenous people, who brings order to the new world on the assumption that none exists there. Or not the right kind of order. The title echoes President George Bush's post-Desert Storm slogan, and the action of *The Inside Story* is punctuated by an off-stage voice describing the technical and lethal properties of the weapons used in that campaign. Peter Schumann's political puppetry has always been an uneasy mixture of highly imaginative presentation through masks, puppet figures, processions, flags, and mechanical devices; and blunt statements—spoken or printed on banners—proclaiming the social and economic sins against which the productions struggle.

Columbus, in his new image, is a natural for familiar Bread and Puppet themes: the horrors of war, capitalistic greed, environmental desecration, the conquest of native peoples. Despite my sympathy with the Bread and Puppet positions, I am uncomfortable in the face of directness that sometimes seems simple-minded; even the irony of the weapons' descriptions is self-defeating because the satiric point is made quickly and finally buried under the weight of repetition. I must admit that I am probably at fault for wanting complexity in a complex world, because the genre does not have room for a Columbus who has both the imagination to sail the ocean and the failure of imagination in bringing the worst of the old world with him. Bread and Puppet is allied to agitprop, cartoon, demonstration, forms of politics/art that necessarily keep the messages aggressively simple. In the case of Bread and Puppet, however, my discomfort grows out of the fact that it is so much more forceful in what it does than in what it says.

*The Inside Story*, as a program note says, is "the story of his fateful name: Christopher, the Christbearer, and Columbus, the Dove, bringer of peace or at least the peculiar peace of subjugation and outright genocide." This is explanation, explication. How much more impressive is the scene in which Columbus presents his plan ("His Vision of the World" to the Spanish court, great flat figures which seem to change expression as they are tipped one way or another, unable or unwilling to accept him until Queen Isabella—a three-dimensional figure—enters and gives the journey her blessing. After Columbus's election (he wears an all-purpose American-hero head that looks as much like George Washington as it does Columbus), he is taken to worship before the cross, and the Christ figure is taken down and placed on his back. He is to carry Christ to the heathen. Once the new order is established, the crew members—wearing the thug-like masks that are often used in Bread and Puppet productions—raise the image of the crucified Christ, but they do so by renailing him to the cross, the continuing crucifixion on the new-world stage. There are other highly effective images, like the tree which shakes in trepidation as its treasures are removed to welcome Columbus, only to be replaced by hanging figures as performers playing the Indians slip out of their masks and robes, leaving the empty figures waving on the branches. Columbus's trees bear a strange fruit.

*The Outside Story* seems less unified than the *Inside* one, but that is because it makes use of the natural setting, a great number of volunteers, and the giant figures for which Bread and Puppet is famous. In this part of the story, Columbus and his crew (now in suits and ties) operate in the contemporary world, continuing the five-hundred-year-old invasion by building Hydro-Quebec on James Bay, destroying native habitat. Although the struggle over the James Bay project has taken some interesting turns recently (Governor Mario Cuomo rejected it), which Bread and Puppet cannot or has not incorporated into its presentation, the theme here is destruction. The most effective image is a parade of caribou—variations on the old two-man vaudeville horse with tree branches for horns—which ambles prettily down a hillside, only to be dehorned by Indians who have been co-opted by the thug-businessmen-bureaucrats. An elaborate machine is raised to which, one after another, the tree branch horns are attached and then pulled away, carrying the covering with them and exposing huddled, frightened figures—flats once again—that are eventually knocked over, left sprawling.

Although the polemical element is central to what Bread and Puppet is trying to do, the primary quality of its work is festive. Setting up shop on killing ground, Bread and Puppet is life-affirming. This leads to a sense of fun that pervades the work, making puppet villains almost likable—comic, at least. This quality can be seen in two extra-dramatic devices. When Bread and Puppet plays inside, the evening traditionally opens with a free preshow on the street, which includes a lively band and stilt walkers. It was raining the night I saw *The Inside Story*, so the preshow had moved inside the Painted Bride art gallery where a dainty young woman high up on stilts, kicked spiritedly to raggedy jazz. The other ritual, which puts the Bread in the company name, is the passing out of warm bread, newly baked in an improvised oven, which customarily brings outside productions to a close in a love feast. The joyful aspect of the group is most evident in the obvious pleasure of the hard-working volunteers. Friends of mine, whose children (Miquon schoolers) declined to perform, became children themselves in their delight in being part of a massive production that had come together in only a few days. *The Outside Story* may have been about an outrage on James Bay, but in itself it was a celebration on the Miquon hillside.

GERALD WEALES

**Have you renewed your Associate membership?**

★★★★★★★

**Benefactors $1,000 Supporters $500 Patrons $250**

**Charter $125 Sustaining $50**

★★★★★★★

**Commonweal Associates 15 Dutch Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10038**



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dave Leedy

## Mother and Child

*for Jim Rosen*

1.
One summer I saw day by day the painting
of a mother and child. The artist worked late;
mornings while he slept, I'd walk past his house
down to the barn, and with his permission
go in and look at a night's work.
The child was standing in her arms,
his own arms out, ready to fly up
like a bird, or run on the air to her face
bent down toward him and partly away.

Sometimes I'd see a crown
removed; restored; removed. A hand
blown out like a light, then brought back.
Nothing on earth grew like that.
All night for a one-inch tilting of the head.
The puppet motions, one hand
attended to while the rest held still.
Complexions changing a day
after any cause or a day before.
Sometimes a veil almost white
covered angels and mother, for a morning
or a few days, protection more felt
than seen for one so aware
of our future, so little aware of us.

2.
"If I draw a woman with a child
is there anything I could do with my paint
and my brushes to make her not a Madonna?
I could paint dancers, a pond of lilies.
At the bottom, I have to put my own name."

Sometimes going back up the hill
I'd see my friend standing on his porch
for a first look at the day. He waves, I wave.
We could draw or write anything
if we'd leave off our names.
Sometimes we do, as when disaster turns
the hearts of fathers to their children,
or now, letting one gesture go,
a different one return.

3.
What will the room be like
when its painting goes? Unlike itself;
more still, more bright.
Tubes of paint, shining in their open boxes,
or out, in rows of four and five.
A bookcase filled with jars of brushes
lined up like the absent books.
A green chair showing its white insides.

Pinned on the wall around the chair
a dozen, two dozen of the mother and child:
pencil drawings, two-color studies,
small, profusely white. Had she been there
they would have seemed schematic.
But they were almost more lovely
in the breeze that came in,
like ribbons welcoming someone home.

S.E. Mead

## Dreamland U.S.A.

Main Street's a cliff.
I live in the mansion
of a barn breaking down.
Drafts pass.
Even the stratosphere's
dilapidated. It opens
me to the beauty
of paint peeling wood.

This well's just as decrepit,
an old rusty hand pump.
Vibrant rain dissolves upward.
Tap the sky, plumb the Tigris.

In summer cicadas swarm here.
We film the plague, sell
pottery, antiques, bake
brownies.

Heaven edges a tattered
tapestry. Stars soothe, lie
still.

Nourished potent, our nights
dream. Tomorrow is everything

and so is the day after.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Discourage this man

**LIFE ITSELF**
Abortion in the American Mind
**Roger Rosenblatt**
Random House, $20, 194 pp.

**Margaret O'Brien Steinfels**

There is a form of discourse in the tony parts of American TV for which Roger Rosen-blatt serves as a perfect example. It sounds serious, it appears thoughtful, and it resonates with heartfelt conviction. Its sincerity is often dimly shadowed by banal thinking, but only a knowledgeable viewer would take exception to its well-wrought sentences and morally fraught analysis. This discourse is perfectly suited to the closing "essay" regularly featured on the "MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour"—a slot Rosenblatt often shares with Anne Taylor Fleming. Why is it always a distinct relief to flip to the raucous bullies on CNN's "Crossfire" when Rosenblatt or Fleming closes the "Newshour"?

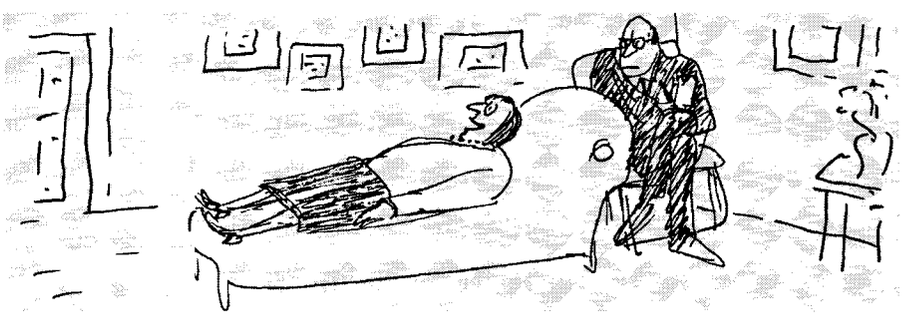
When an excerpt from *Life Itself* appeared in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, I passed it by, though I was surprised that Rosenblatt would take up such a controversial subject as abortion. Several people, tending to the prolife side of the debate, recommended it to me as a solid statement of a potential middle-of-the-road, prochoice position—one that they imagined I might find helpful. And indeed the magazine piece was worth reading, in part because I imagined the *Times*' prochoice audience also reading it and seeing several of their treasured platitudes sent up in smoke. And at 10 percent of the book price, the magazine version was also a bargain. Now at somewhat greater length and less precision, *Life Itself* shows Rosenblatt true to form, earnest but anguished, and ultimately confused and confusing about what a middle-ground position might look like in our political culture.

Rosenblatt sums up his quest for this elusive position in the formula "permit but discourage." By permit, he means *Roe* v. *Wade* should be left standing, and if it is not, he favors national legislation—perhaps on the order of the Freedom of Choice Act now before Congress. By discourage he means all of those means of persuasion, education, and material and social supports that might reduce the numbers of women who become pregnant and who choose to have abortions. In fact, he seems ready to try almost anything but changing the law. Though Mary Ann Glendon's *Divorce and Abortion in Western Law* is duly catalogued in the bibliography, Rosenblatt seems unaware that the U.S. has one of the most permissive abortion laws in the world, one more closely resembling China's than England's. And though the polls he cites show that support for *Roe* v. *Wade* has eroded steadily since 1972—perhaps because Americans have become better informed about what it actually does permit (specifically, second- and third-trimester abortions)—Rosenblatt never considers the possibility that changing the law itself would send a message about "discouraging" abortion. Why is that?

Because what bothers Rosenblatt about abortion is not how or why it is right or wrong, but the divisions it has brought to our society and to the body politic. Duly acknowledging "moral" positions on both sides and even insisting on their importance to each side, he himself admits only to a label, "conventional prochoice." In fact, it is not clear that Rosenblatt has a clue about what a moral view really is.

What he is intent on exploring and exposing as the heart of the issue are the private, complicated, and ambiguous "feelings" people have about abortion. But precisely because people have such feelings and they are complicated, ambiguous, and slippery, especially in public debate, both proponents of prolife and prochoice views have developed serious and sustained moral arguments. It is impossible to debate without them—as Rosenblatt grandiloquently and unwittingly admits: "For those declared prochoice as well as those declared prolife, for most everyone whom the issue touches, abortion is too difficult to speak of, too personal, too mysterious, nobody's business, not even ours." Nobody's?

Anyone who has ever had two consistent and consecutive moral thoughts on any issue will be driven mad by this book. But in an odd twist of rhetorical fate prochoicers will be driven further than others. For Rosenblatt is one of them. His agnosticism on the moral issues implicitly concedes that prolife moral views are as good (or bad), as



*"We're grappling with the mysteries of life, aren't we, Doctor?"*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

useful (or useless) as those of the prochoicers. His insistence on the pain and regret women may feel after an abortion is a concession prochoicers have mightily resisted allowing into the public discussion. And though his formulation "permit but discourage" comes down in the wrong moral, legal, and political place, it could go some distance in shaping a middle-ground and helping to reduce the number of abortions.

Those on the prolife side of the argument should not necessarily take comfort in the discomfort Rosenblatt brings to the prochoice side. For *Life Itself* signals that abortion is now a "touchable" subject for journalists and commentators like Rosenblatt who speak and write as if no one had treated the topic with the seriousness it deserved before their own arrival on the scene. If there is to be a middle ground, honoring the moral seriousness of the abortion issue and contributing to political civility, then such efforts must be truly clarifying and not grandly obfuscating. Rosenblatt fails on this score. But just wait til Diane Sawyer and Sam Donaldson have a go at it. □

# IT AIN'T OVER 'TIL IT'S OVER

**THE END OF HISTORY AND THE LAST MAN**
**Francis Fukuyama**
The Free Press, $24.95, 418 pp.

**Patrick J. Deneen**

Francis Fukuyama's 1989 article "The End of History?" in *The National Interest* caused a sensation in both academic and nonacademic circles of a magnitude unprecedented since Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* in 1987. The resemblance of the sound and the fury is not coincidental: Fukuyama—a former student of Bloom's—veered from the well-worn discursive paths within the field of international relations with as much aplomb as did Bloom in domestic fields. Fukuyama's book—fundamentally a lengthy extension of his original article—should continue to infuriate as well as stimulate debate as the West finds itself somewhat lost in a new but no less frightening international arena.

Fukuyama's thesis is grand, even brash at times, deriving as much from the subtle and difficult theories of Hegel and Nietzsche as from recent developments on the front pages. History—conceived here not as a pastiche of disjunct events, but in broad, panoramic strokes from which developmental stages can be discerned—has reached its logical conclusion with the worldwide embrace of the "universal and homogeneous" state of liberal democracy. Fukuyama contends—and, one would have to admit, correctly—that no other political arrangement contains the legitimate and ethical components found in the liberal democracies of Europe and the United States. Fukuyama provides ample historical evidence demonstrating the decline of alternative political arrangements, notably fascism and communism; but the display of evidence is secondary to his larger contention that it is the *idea* of liberal democracy that has prevailed, and that localized exceptions merely continue to play out the necessary conflict that will inevitably drive each nation to similar liberal arrangements.

Such a cavalier dismissal of contradictory historical evidence is grounded in Fukuyama's supporting thesis that there are two forces which impel the course of History. First, the exigencies of national defense will inevitably require a country to pursue a policy of a scientific research, and thus foster economic development that supports—materially and educationally—continued military competitiveness. The result of this first force in its most developed form is market capitalism. Nevertheless, Fukuyama acknowledges, a capitalist economy does not necessarily result in a democratic polity, and thus a second force is introduced: the struggle for *recognition*. In perhaps the most original and controversial part of the book, Fukuyama links the Hegelian notion of "recognition" (*Annerkenung*) with the Platonic source of honor, *thymos*—translated alternately as "heart" or "spiritedness." Described as the "psychological seat" of the human desire for recognition, *thymos* is the inegalitarian impulse that drives the human person to struggle for recognition of his or her human dignity; writ large, that worldwide individual struggle ironically results in democracy, the only political system in which each person is both accorded recognition by, and is in turn required to recognize the dignity of, fellow citizens.

Yet this very solution contains the seeds of its own dissolution: recognition, by its very essence, requires, on


GUELPH CENTRE OF SPIRITUALITY
***Symposium on Ignatian Spirituality***
THE HIERARCHY OF VALUES
IN THE
SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST. IGNATIUS
**PRESENTERS**
*Margaret Brennan, I.H.M.*
*Regis College, Toronto, Ontario*
*Brian O'Leary, S.J.*
*Milltown Institute of Theology & Philosophy, Dublin*
*George Schemel, S.J.*
*University of Scranton, Pennsylvania*
**September 25-27, 1992**
*LOYOLA HOUSE*
*Guelph, Ontario*
For further information contact:
Virginia Varley, C.S.J.
Loyola House, P.O. Box 245
Guelph, Ontario N1H 6J9, Canada
Tel. (519) 824-1250 Fax (519) 767-0994




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the one hand, inferiors to whom one can compare oneself advantageously; and alternatively, those in a superior position whose esteem is worth seeking. Egalitarian democracy leaves the individual's *thymotic* desires unsatisfied, akin to "the Last Man" scenario described by Nietzsche in which mankind is left materially contented but spiritually bereft as an equal if mediocre democratic citizen. The "End of History" is by no means to be celebrated in Fukuyama's estimation; in fact, given the inevitability of humanity's continuing search for recognition, the end of History may simply result in a condition of such overarching discontent that human beings will once again struggle—this time against equality itself—thereby jeopardizing the stability of liberal democracy and starting the march of History anew.

Fukuyama's conclusions are certain to provoke an angry response by those on the Left, particularly Marxists, who will be disturbed by the supposed configuration of the economy at the end of History, and liberals who will object to the Nietzschean conclusions that Fukuyama draws from the dynamics of egalitarianism. The vehemence of their response should be indicative of the threat they perceive from Fukuyama's thesis—and justly so. Ultimately, these opposition camps share an uncomfortable similarity with Fukuyama's approach, namely a belief in the progressive course of History. They will object, then, not necessarily with the *premises* of Fukuyama's analysis, but with its *conclusions*, rather seeking alternative explanations that will result in a more benevolent future. Such debates should prove amusing: for, if the forces of History must inevitably result in a single tableau, then arguments over its likely appearance should prove quite irrelevant.

Notwithstanding these critics, significant (and *consequential*) questions should remain for those not wholly satisfied with Fukuyama's thesis, yet sympathetic with some of his criticisms of modern liberal democracy. While at first glance it seems apparent that the two forces of History can be divided into a material explanation (scientific capitalism) and a *moral* explanation (*thymotic* democracy), further contemplation should force us to conclude otherwise. In fact, by calling attention to the *philosophical* origins of the scientific method—namely, in the writings of Francis Bacon and his Renaissance contemporaries—Fukuyama indicates that scientific and capitalistic development was, and to some extent still is, subject to moral considerations. Alternatively, the individual's craving for recognition has been a *natural* feature of the human psyche, at least since the first chapters of Genesis. The inherent contradiction described by Fukuyama concerning the egalitarian result of humanity's *thymos* and the individual's subsequent dissatisfaction, suggests no more than the long-standing Judeo-Christian belief that solutions to the cravings of the human soul are not available in wholly secular—including political—terms. Fukuyama, while recognizing the paradox of the individual's desires, nevertheless appears to accept without perturbation Hegel's thesis that Christianity is the culminating "slave-morality" of world history, and that its replacement by liberal democracy has made the individual's inferiority to God unnecessary. Yet, only through "recognition" originating from a higher source can mankind achieve both meaningful equality (as mutual subjects) *and* recognition (through worship and imitation of the divine). Otherwise—following to its conclusion the argument originally shared by both Hegel and Nietzsche, and acknowledged by Fukuyama—the sole secular source of recognition in a world of liberal democracy is through participation in the glories of warfare. And given the destructive forces that we now wield against one another in this potential struggle for wholly earthly recognition, we may quite literally find ourselves at the end of History, but this time with no one to lament its passing. □

# WHAT LOVE IS THIS?

**MARIETTE IN ECSTASY**
**Ron Hansen**
Edward Burlingham Books, $20, 179 pp.

**Elizabeth Beverly**

In 1906, young Mariette Baptiste enters a convent in upstate New York where her older sister Reverend Mother Céline is the prioress. Mariette is a postulant; she wants to be a saint. She is lusciously beautiful with cascades of chocolate hair bound under her scarf. She awaits miracles to befall her. Around her other sisters carry on the devotions of daily work; some are distracted by a longing for Mariette's saintliness. Others are irritated by this distraction. Père Marriott wishes to guide her with gentleness. Reverend Mother Céline, who grows very ill, is contending with mysteries of her own.

To continue with this summary would be to reveal unfairly what happens in Ron Hansen's short, tightly coiled novel, but it is no mystery that the central focus of the story might well be whether or not Mariette's ecstasy, the manifestation of Divine Love in the form of stigmata, truly comes from God. We could ask earnestly if God has chosen Mariette's body for a demonstration of his passion, or whether Mariette is a fraud who has simulated a miracle. We might also wonder about her mental stability; has she quite unconsciously deluded herself into manifesting Christ's wounds? This last choice clearly represents our late twentieth-century embrace of the extraordinary, and attests to our desire to honor the miraculous without having to believe in it.

Although the mystery of the "authen-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ticity" of Mariette's wounds may tantalize us, Ron Hansen is tantalized by another mystery: the uses of earthly power when a purported miracle moves into an ordinary community. For although these religious live in a convent, we quickly come to realize that this group of women is neither more nor less privileged in the acceptance or rejection of the miraculous than is anyone else. In fact for many of them, the cloister represents a retreat from the singular, and an embrace of, if not the secular, then certainly the mundane. The flanks of cows, the scent of grasses, the crests of clouds, the "zing" of an iron shovel—these are the common glories of God and, for many, are miracle enough. How can they be required to handle such a gaudy display as blood "scribbling" down a beautiful young girl's arms?

Hansen is at once a canny and an uncanny writer. His craft is almost visible; but his reverence for language startles. His work resembles the vast and remarkable creations of early nineteenth-century landscape architects, who, through the sheer artistry of planning, planting, and visionary cropping, created realms of apparently easygoing Nature out of a generally messy earth. The intentionality of every word and the crafting of every sentence are implicit. The effect is never fussy, but exhilarating, as if every act of language in this small book is an act of reverence. Hansen's world buzzes with precise life. This is a deft and necessary move, if we are to believe that some sisters find Mariette's ecstasy an extravagance while others find it a perfection. For ultimately, this in an inquiry into balance: what it takes for a community to maintain its balance while a young and thrilling girl whirls giddily with the love of God.

And what love! Hansen addresses with marvelous and somewhat shocking ease one of the greatest challenges of our incarnation. When the body becomes an instrument of devotion, how does one draw a clear line between *agape* and *eros*? How does one feel fully and with abandon, and still trust oneself to be physically prudent? What does it mean to suffer for Christ if one's body is vibrant with life? More specifically, what does this mean if one is a woman? At the same time Hansen recognizes the longing for human recognition in the solitude of exacting spiritual discipline, and he hearkens back to the scene of female recognition in Luke in which pregnant Elizabeth "sees" Mary as Mother of God. In Hansen's novel, Céline is the older "sister" whom "little Mary" approaches. In the Gospel, of course, John's leap in Elizabeth's womb is an affirmation of the Lord's presence. This leap brings Mary to womanly life. But Céline's womb is not full of life, and Mariette, full of longing both for the Lord and for her sister's kindness, remains unrecognized by her own sister. This is a loss of great consequence.

The longing for female recognition is set against an ongoing male rivalry between Mariette's spiritual father, Père Marriott, and her earthly one, Dr. Baptiste, a man of science who misses her terribly. If the world of cloistered


## Director of Campus Ministry

## Sacred Heart University

Established in 1963, Sacred Heart University is a co-educational, independent institution of higher learning in the Catholic intellectual tradition whose primary objective is to prepare men and women to live in and make their contributions to the human community. With a student population of 4,600, the University offers 24 Bachelor's and 5 Master's degrees. Entering the fourth year of an aggressive Strategic Plan, the University is adding academic programs, on-campus residential housing, a state-of-the-art computer center and network, and a new recreational complex.

The University seeks an experienced person to assume the position of Director of Campus Ministry. The Director of Campus Ministry will provide spiritual leadership to the University community in the context of its evolving commitment to its Catholic identity. The Director will assist the institution in building the University's commitment to an active worship life, faith formation, and responsiveness to social justice issues in the light of Catholic social teaching. Reporting directly to the President, the Director will be responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan for the Campus Ministry area and to building a staff to implement the plan. The Director will supervise all activities of the Campus Ministry staff, and will coordinate all religious convocations. A Master's degree is required, with graduate work in Theology preferred. Prior supervisory experience, strong pastoral and problem-solving abilities, and superior interpersonal and communication skills are a must for this position.

Qualified applicants may send a letter of application, two copies of a résumé, and references by June 30, 1992 to:

Anthony J. Cernera, Ph.D.
President
Sacred Heart University
5151 Park Avenue
Fairfield, CT 06432

Sacred Heart University is an Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Employer




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

women determines the atmosphere of belief and doubt within which Mariette must function, the world of men is still the one which must determine Mariette's fate, and in this way, the book shifts into the realm of gender politics in a surprisingly predictable fashion. While Père Marriott says to her, "I don't believe it's possible. I do believe it happened," and affirms both his belief in the mysterious events he must evaluate and his amazement even at himself, we can expect that her father, Dr. Baptiste, will be somewhat less amazed, somewhat more critical.

But what do we do with God? I am pleased and satisfied with Hansen's decision to let us weigh this mystery as we will, and as we should all sacred acts. But what I wonder about is the lurking masculinity of God and his intentions regarding Mariette. For Mariette is young and beautiful; "she esteems her full breasts as she has seen men esteem them." Hers is a body that any man would choose. And if God has chosen her and not Sister Saint-Stanislas or Sister Saint-Luc, then what does this say about God? No wonder some of the sisters are disheartened, for if God in his heaven is behaving like any man on earth, then what is the point of the exhausting enterprise of daily spiritual life? Hansen's choice of Mariette is, of course, not necessarily God's choice. But this familiar privileging of female youth and beauty does allow a shiver of cynicism to enter not only a fictional convent in upstate New York, but also the tired mind of a reviewer who admires Hansen at least in part because he reveres that which is fresh and startling and wholly new in God's vast creation. □

# A BIAS FOR HOPE

**WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE?**
How American Christians Think About Economic Justice
**Stephen Hart**
Oxford University Press, $24.95, 240 pp.

**Kenneth P. Jameson**

Popular culture always gives a mixed rendition of the values of a society, and perhaps only in retrospect can we sort things out. But for those of us with a "bias for hope," there is evidence from some recent movies that a slow but sure transformation of the values our culture supports and esteems is underway. The success of *Beauty and the Beast* may be largely artistic, but its morality tale must have played a role as well. *Grand Canyon*'s central message is the revolutionary view that "we are our brothers' and our sisters' keepers," even if we may make mistakes in the effort to reach out to others. And *Mississippi Masala* suggests the hope that the younger generation can actually make a go of multiculturalism and interracial harmony. Shades of the 1960s!

Stephen Hart would like to contribute to such a change in society's direction, for he is a "socialist-feminist and a pacifist...[with] a special concern with why the work of the American Left has not met with more success, and how it could." Since "almost nine out of ten Americans consider themselves Christians—and in most cases either belong to a church or in some other way manifest a significant connection to Christian faith," Hart feels that the Left program, or concern with social justice and its embodiment in social policy, must ultimately draw upon and collaborate with religious impulses toward social justice. His book attempts to isolate and categorize those impulses among American Christians and to assess their possible role in the movement toward social justice.

The raw material for the book is a set of "depth-interviews" carried out in 1976 with forty-seven self-declared Christians. The interviews were designed to explore elements of religiosity as well as attitudes toward social justice. Obviously, the intervening sixteen years would seem to reduce the relevance of the interviews; however, as the pendulum swings, attitudes toward social justice in 1992 may be very similar to those in 1976, and they may be moving in the direction Hart hopes. Also the effort to link religious views with secular policies is now more plausible. Historically, the "religious Right" clearly played an important, if subservient, role in the political program that became Reaganism. That program was accepted, validated, and justified by religious fundamentalists, mainline pastors, and religious opinion-makers. In the end, the Right was served far better than religion, which should dampen Christians' enthusiasm for Hart's vision of a new revolution of social justice led by the religious Left.

The book is divided into five sections. The first synthesizes the depth interviews by focusing on the attitudes toward economic life of seven individuals whose views cover a wide spectrum. Only overt racism and classism appear inconsistent with religious commitment. Section two links faith to economic issues using five themes or tendencies in religion: voluntarism (individualism), universalism, love, this-worldliness, and otherworldliness. In each theme Hart

## REVIEWERS

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS *is editor of* Commonweal.

PATRICK J. DENEEN, *a graduate student of political theory at Rutgers University, is currently writing a dissertation about the influence of Homer's* Odyssey *on Western political thought.*

ELIZABETH BEVERLY *is a writer and ethnographer who teaches at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon.*

KENNETH P. JAMESON *is professor of economics at the University of Utah. He is currently serving as associate vice-president for academic affairs.*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

finds elements that could contribute to the social justice movement. At the same time, he finds a mixture of most of these thematic orientations in all of his main respondent types. So commitment to a religion does not imply any particular stance on issues of social justice.

This information leads to one of Hart's main claims, that conservative theology does not lead to conservative economics. The implication of this result is unclear, though it suggests at a minimum that the Left should not simply discount religious conservatives. Religion provides no more coherence on issues of social justice than does popular culture.

There is one notable exception to this pattern: Catholics. Hart writes: "It also helps that the Catholic church itself, much more than most Protestant churches, articulates a rationale for being socially active as an organization, and uses its teaching powers to suggest to members that they should link their own faith to their visions of a just society." The magisterium does lead the Catholics in Hart's sample, both conservatives and liberals, to a commitment to the ideals of social justice. Could that be a factor in the continued growth of Catholicism (and Mormonism) while mainline Protestant churches decline?

The four chapters of section three ask questions which constitute the analytical core of the book: Do Christians integrate or compartmentalize their religion and their economic/political actions; how does integrating religion and politics affect one's stance on the distribution of income and on private enterprise; what attitudes toward equality and individualism grow out of Christianity; how should individuals act in the political sphere to attain their economic values? Again the answer is that religion gives little coherence in and of itself, that attitudes and views of Christians vary across virtually the entire spectrum.

Section four treats methodological issues and in the last section Hart suggests "what one might want to do to advance the purposes of the Left, or (*sic*) of Christian faith and churches." He hopes his results help the Left work more effectively with Christian allies, clarify the values that leftists believe should inform economic life, and refine thinking about ethical and cultural subjects. My own conclusions about the meaning of the materials in the book are somewhat different.

First, it is clear that a Christian religious commitment of itself will provide no impetus for policies and efforts to attain greater social justice in our society. Christianity seems to accommodate virtually any set of views on these issues.

Second, this may not be bad, especially for Christianity, if I read the lesson of Reaganism correctly. During Ronald Reagan's short era politics dominated, and presidential politics was based upon wealth, manipulation of public opinion, and the Democrats' sense of malaise. Economics followed, the clearest example being "supply-side economics" which was not economics and which actually relied on demand, in the form of budget deficits, for its few positive accomplishments. Morality or religion also followed; the conservative social/moral agenda of the "moral majority" was joined with an individualistic or voluntaristic justification for economic inequality. Religion and morality suffered by being in the service of politics.

Third, Catholicism and Catholic social teaching are advantaged in this fray. For they provide a religiously grounded moral context and a set of teachings which challenge self-interest and self-deception. They don't lead to political programs or to universal positions on political and social issues, but they do give a consistent impetus in the direction of social justice.

Hart may finally realize this, for he ends the book with the work of Stanley Hauerwas, a Protestant theologian. Hauerwas is a "postliberal" who rejects Hart's hopes that Christianity can energize the Left, claiming there is no core of religious commitments common to all traditions, that Christians must be transformed personally and socially by their convictions. He reaches a position of social commitment, though not as a necessary outcome of postliberal theology which remains secondary to the personal transformation of the individual. Hauerwas's position is not far from the contemporary position of another theological strain he admires, liberation theology. Although its critics would have us believe that liberation theology is simply Marxism in a religious skin, it has evolved into a profound concern with individual and communal spirituality. Building the kingdom of God on earth must begin with building that kingdom in the soul of each of us. As Gustavo Gutierrez wrote in *We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People:*

> There is no Christian life without "songs" to the Lord, without thanksgiving for God's love, and without prayer. But the songs are sung by persons living in particular historical situations, and these provide the framework within which they perceive God's presence and also God's absence....[The current state of affairs] represents a "favorable time"(2 Cor. 6:2), a *kairos*, a moment of heightened revelation both of God and of new paths on the journey of fidelity to the word of God.

I share many of Hart's hopes for the future and my bias is to find evidence in popular culture and in religious teaching and practice to encourage that hope. I don't share his enthusiasm for Christians, as Christians, leading that change, for religion to begin shaping politics and economics. Perhaps the 1990s do offer a *kairos*, but it must be based on "a transformation, personally as well as socially." □

## CORRESPONDENCE

*(Continued from page 2)*

so be it. But in that case a prayer to God that she be kept away from the nation's children seems to me as "overly dramatic and probably unnecessary" as Steinfels's earlier "flight to the soap box"—and measurably more mean-spirited.

DENNIS K. MOORE

*(Continued on page 30)*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

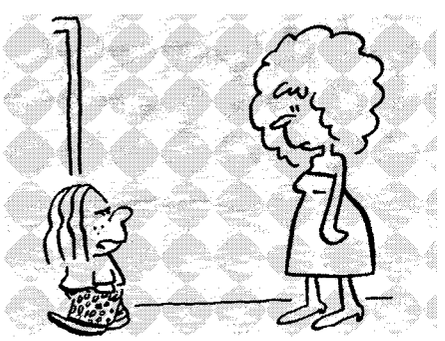
## The author replies:

From these and other letters it's clear that I wasn't clear. I may have tried to say too big a thing in too small a space.

Try again: Because they are dependent, children do indeed have special rights which must be recognized in statutes and courts and other agencies of society that must protect them from abuse, deprivation, acute neglect, or carelessness on the part of those primarily charged with their care. So far, no quarrel.

The problem rises when enthusiasts for codification and institutionalized protection of children's rights come to rely too heavily on the blunt instruments at their command. Courts cannot parent. At their sometimes considerable best, social agencies can only substitute for families—they are not the real thing.

Thus, though children must sometimes be rescued from dysfunctional families, real progress for children will come when our first resort is to try to rescue children in and through their families rather than apart from them; when our first concern is for the needs of real children rather than their abstract civil rights. Society's commitment to the child through the family serves in itself to foster parental responsibility, provided of course that we make that commitment real by giving primary attention, concern, and money to the healing of families: by individualized social work, yes, but also by ensuring that families can provide decent housing, nutrition, security, schooling. This is so that children can have what families, even imperfect families in an imperfect world, can best supply: constant love, a sense of connectedness, guidance, and restraint. In my reading of Hillary Clinton's essay, these priorities were not in evidence. Hence my last line. But it's fine if she becomes secretary of state. MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS



*"Okay, I'll take my bath and go to bed, but remember—a family cannot long endure half slave and half free."*

## Misusing Eucharist

Bergenfield, N.J.

*To the Editors:* Depriving people of the Eucharist should not be so cavalierly used as a measure of "discipline" against couples who use contraceptives and doctors who prescribe them or advise their use [Correspondence, May 8]. Consider, first, the myriad of circumstances in which people in this group find themselves. Second, it *cannot* be the mind of Christ that the Eucharist, instituted by him as a source from which springs man's most intimate impetus toward the good, should be used as an instrument of coercion. If a bishop wants to correct members of his flock, why not impose on them a duty to spend added time in prayer and reading the Scriptures?

Beyond this, to me it is pure casuistry to propose that a couple who uses Natural Family Planning to avoid conception are somehow more "justified" than another couple who use different methods for the same purpose. Obviously, the ability to use NFP must be dependent on many factors, e.g., the cooperation of one's spouse, temperament, education, etc. Why burden the consciences of so many good people, many of whom are undoubtedly already clinging-as-they-can to their church? And why deprive them of the one thing which we believe in faith can work in their lives to transform them?

RAYMOND F. ROBERTS, JR.

## Still unreasonable

Lake Tomahawk, Wis.

*To the Editors:* Unlike "most nuanced dissenters" (Monsignor William B. Smith, Correspondence, May 8), I do argue for the merits of contraception. Like many others I find the arguments supporting the "formal teaching that artificial contraception is 'intrinsically evil'" to be deeply unreasonable because they are based on an understanding of the natural law that is incomplete and inaccurate since it totally ignores the psychological and emotional dimensions of our nature and our relationships.

Sooner or later Catholic teaching on marriage and sex is going to have to recognize that human emotional needs are not figments of pop pyschology but exist as natural neurochemical physical states in our brains. They are a vital, intrinsic part of our created humanness. They shape our actions and our relationships. To ignore these needs or assign them a secondary status as mere human inventions is as devastating to the human soul as ignoring nutritional needs is to bodily life.

Procreation as sharing in God's creation of persons in God's image encompasses more than just conceiving. Successful procreation involves rearing children to become caring adults capable of obeying God's law of love. This requires the kind of emotionally nurturing environment created by a mutually loving relationship between the parents.

Many married couples have learned that, given mutual commitment, over time contraception enables them to use the intimacy of sexual intercourse more effectively to help them develop this relationship. Thus, rather than violating the "intimate structure" of the act by separating the procreative from the unitive meaning of sexual intercourse, contraception actually can help the couple fulfill both meanings more effectively. Anyone who learns this will find the arguments underlying *Humanae vitae* totally unreasonable and nonbinding. MARILYN KRAMER

## Terms of exclusion

Hempstead, N.Y.

*To the Editors:* The recent exchanges on Bishop Flavin [Robert Hoyt, February 14; Russell B. Connors, Jr., March 13; Correspondence, May 8] were depressing, largely because the debate was conducted within old frames of reference that no longer shape the thinking of most Catholics. On the one hand, the critics of Bishop Flavin tiptoe around *Humanae vitae*, treat papal infallibility as a given, and act as though the right to dissent has nothing to do with the proven capacity of the magisterium to teach error. On the other hand, the bishop's supporters cite Pope



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

John Paul II as though papal pronouncements settle the matter once and for all.

Too many people know that the magisterium was wrong on usury, wrong on anti-Semitism, wrong on religious liberty, wrong in its casual way of assigning eternal damnation as the appropriate consequence for all manner of failings (hell for eating meat on Friday? for missing Sunday Mass?). And vast numbers who do not know these things know that the magisterium is wrong on contraception.

Moreover, the judgment of these dissenters is not so remote from the official teachings of the hierarchy. In a few passages, Vatican II confirmed traditional notions of ecclesiastical authority, but its larger actions set us on a different course. When the council accepted the legitimacy of non-Catholic forms of Christianity, accepted the legitimacy of religious freedom as a principle of civil society, repudiated the tradition of anti-Semitism—when these things happened, traditional conceptions of ecclesiastical authority began to crumble. And yet, while the body of the pilgrim church moves fitfully and uncertainly in a new direction, some conservative clergy define themselves as the church, dig in, and set stiff terms for inclusion.

At a time when we should be forging a new conception of authority that could save us, on the one hand, from the authoritarianism of the past and, on the other, from the fragmentation that will increase as traditional clerical use of authority forfeits credibility, it is tragic that we should instead be arguing about whether or not *Humanae vitae* was infallible. JOHN C. MOORE

*The writer is professor of history at Hofstra University.*

## CLASSIFIED

RATES: 80¢ a word, one time; 76¢ three times; 72¢ six times; Classified payable with order; monthly in advance for more than three times. COMMONWEAL, 15 Dutch St., NYC 10038.

### Position Offered

Vice-President for Institutional Advancement. Full-time administrative position in Roman Catholic school for ministry, Washington, D.C. area. Focus of position is on fund raising, which entails extensive interaction with religious institutes. Director will participate with administrative team in setting annual goals, policies; and will direct annual fund raising, follow-up on Capital Campaign, design program for deferred giving, alumni/ae giving, and will supervise office staff. Job requires a three-year commitment; M.A. or B.A. Degree, reasonable skill in writing, ease in meeting people, managerial experience in school development work, evidence of success in fund raising, and availability to travel 5-7 days a month. Send replies to Search Committee (NS) Washington Theological Union, 9001 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20903.

### Catholic Priest Wanted

Young, dynamic, and rapidly growing Catholic organization founded in the spirit of Vatican II needs priest. Duties include traveling throughout the U.S. preaching in preassigned parishes on behalf of third-world poor. Yearly stipend and full travel expenses. Reply to: Michael Hickey, Food for the Poor, Inc., 550 S.W. 12 Ave., Deerfield Beach, FL 33442.


*On the brink of an historical turning point*

**Hans Küng**

**JUDAISM**

**Between Yesterday and Tomorrow**

"An eloquent, searching foray into the living heart of Judaism, this profound meditation paves the way for an open dialogue among Jews, Christians and Muslims. The author's conception of Judaism as a dynamic, constantly changing unity informs his sweeping history of the Jewish people. He contemplates the earthly, Jewish Jesus, sifts the Jewish roots of Christianity and frankly discusses the Catholic Church's sordid history of hatred and persecution of Jews through the centuries, culminating in the Holocaust engineered by Austrian Catholic Adolf Hitler, whose anti-Semitism Küng ascribes partly to religious roots. He also grapples with the difficulty of believing in God after the monstrous reality of Auschwitz. Criticizing the founders of modern Israel for alleged anti-Arab policies, the author surveys the Israeli-Arab conflict and supports the creation of a homeland for the Palestinians. Many aspects of this massive, challenging work will undoubtedly be controversial as it wrestles with sensitive issues that divide the three faiths."
—*Publishers Weekly*

624 pages $39.95

*Now at bookstores or from*

**CROSSROAD**

370 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017

**1-800-937-5557**




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# YEAR AFTER YEAR*

***Year after year, this periodical presents an intellectually stimulating dialogue on all aspects of modern Catholic experience (general excellence)... expert analysis... a superbly written, provocative and insightful treatment of a major issue... a piece that takes a gutsy stand (editorial)... colloquial breezy, full of parenthetical asides, but amusing (Frank McConnell on media)... balanced and comprehensive (treatment of the Gulf War) extraordinary imagery... an emotionally moving, almost exhausting and painful experience of life and love (poetry)... an amazing scope of coverage (books). That's how the judges for this year's Catholic Press Association Magazine Awards put it. Please join us, and judge for yourself.**

## COMMONWEAL

*15 Dutch Street, New York, N.Y. 10038*

**Trial subscription offer: 11 issues for $12.**

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

6/19/92

☐ **I prefer a full year's subscription at $36.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED